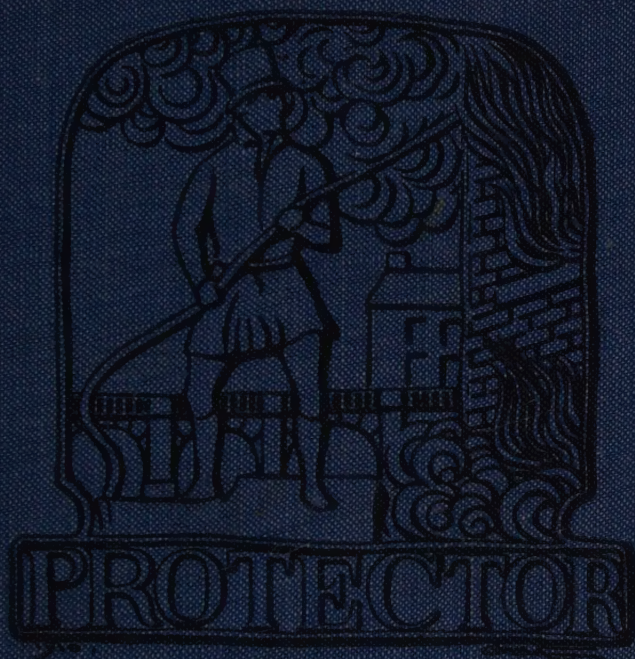


BRITISH FIRE-MARKS

FROM 1680 TO



GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL



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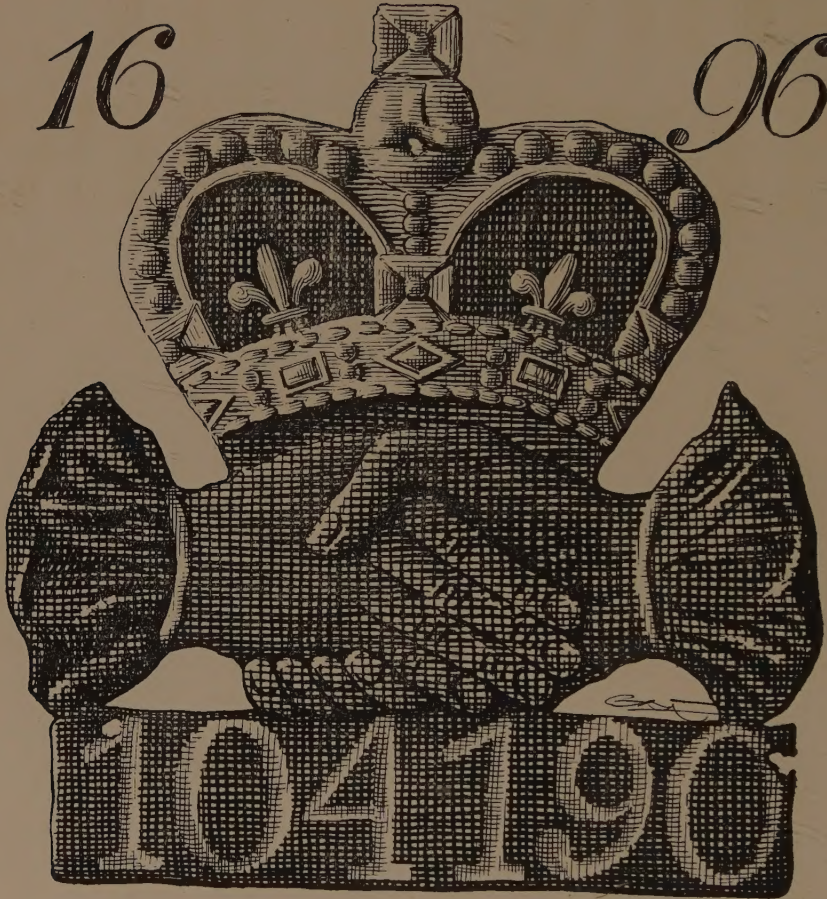
BRITISH FIRE-MARKS

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“THE HAND IN HAND”

BRITISH FIRE-MARKS

FROM 1680



BY
GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL
MB., CM.

WITH
SIXTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY
THE AUTHOR



EDINBURGH & LONDON :
WILLIAM GREEN & SONS . MCMXI

PREFACE.



NCE — and but a comparatively short while ago, too — a friend of mine said to me, “What persuaded *you*, of all people under the sun, to dabble in insurance marks?” Said I, “The sight of the *Sun* set me going, and, like the *Phoenix* of tradition, I jumped bang into the flames,

burnt myself thoroughly well with enthusiasm in the presence of hundreds of old fire-marks and fire-plates, and, almost as quickly, rose from the mere ashes of knowledge to be a not altogether uninformed person upon the history, make and shape, and value of these remarkably interesting objects of a day long since dead.”

I am now rather proud to think that this is the very first book entirely devoted to the subject, though fire-marks have been dealt with indiscriminately by various writers from time to time during the past twenty or thirty years—that is to say, their origin has been discussed, and in some instances the authors have described individual “marks” and “plates.” But it is only quite recently that sundry periodicals have chosen to illustrate a few of the older ones.

In *The Connoisseur* of 1902 Mr. Percy Collins wrote : " It is only within the last few years that collections have been made of fire-marks, *i.e.*, collections from an antiquarian point of view. Quite recently, however, the mania has spread to an alarming extent, and it can now justly be claimed as one branch of the business of a curio-hunter."

I am convinced that no account of fire-marks is of any interest to the general reader, or even one versed in antiquities, without it is copiously and well illustrated; and that is my chief reason for having this work published.

It has been my pleasure to go to the very fountain-head of information regarding the history of the fire-mark. I have gathered together all the accounts I could lay my hands upon, so as to be informed of every writer's own particular views.

My own observations—and they are numerous—have been added to what has already been written. I have, too, been able, here and there, to correct the errors of certain writers, and have thrown a new light upon one or two vexed questions.

Every drawing that I have made for this book has been done straight from the object itself. It is no boast on my part to say that herein is to be found by *far* the largest and best collection of illustrations of these now historic things that has ever been seen inside one cover, or any number of covers, as I have explained in the text. My task has been made easy in one sense, for in Midlothian, where I had done all my drawing, are three of the best collections to be found anywhere; and I had only to go from one to the other to secure specimens for sketching.

I am thus under a great debt of gratitude to the owners of those superlative collections, *viz.*, Mr. A. Bashall Dawson, Mr. Harry J. Stevenson, and Mr. A. Pordage.

It was in April of last year when I saw for the first time in my life the *Sun*. I was engaged at the time over

my *Stones and Curiosities of Edinburgh*, and happened to be in Mr. Butti's little world of antiquities in Queen Street. There I saw a "Sun," the first fire-mark of any kind that was ever in my hand, and the very one which started me thinking, sketching, and writing in a totally new direction. I took him home with me in my pocket, made his portrait, and here it is at the commencement of this Preface.

The reader will observe that I have not fully described, and in some cases not at all, the fire-marks which I have illustrated. I venture to think my portraits of them are so accurate that they need no accompanying letterpress. Consequently I have been saved the trouble of enlarging upon a description of them in the text. Where a fire-mark has not been illustrated I have either described it myself in the text or left a space for the collector to fill in his own description.

There are many fire offices which have been started and closed again, or transferred to other businesses, which may or may not have issued marks or plates, but only those which are known to me to have done so are referred to in this volume.

GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL.

CRAIGVILLE, BLACKHALL,
MIDLOTHIAN.

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*Recalling no names,
But sacred to memory of each gallant fireman—
Him who willingly held his own in his hands,
Seeking to rescue the life of another,
Scorning the thought of death's demands—
Who has died in the flames.*



BRITISH FIRE-MARKS

THE HISTORY OF FIRE-MARKS



LONG before the advent of fire-engines and other mechanical means for saving property, and life too, the people seem to have adopted nothing better than a pail of water and prayer for extinguishing a conflagration. And yet we read of no great fire of the middle ages upon which any

number of pails of water and any amount of unceasing prayer—and a fire in those times would sometimes last for eight or ten days—were sufficient to quench the flames, until there was nothing more for the son of Jupiter and Juno to burn, *i.e.*, until the flames came to a check at the end of a block of buildings. The people would then, with one accord, declare the flames had been appeased by holy prayers!

It was quite natural, however, that mortal man should call upon Providence to save his goods and his wife and family, since he himself had not yet conceived a means of doing so.* But we are told that some people, even as late as the 18th century, were so helpless under the influence of smoke and flames that they—from a safe position too—were unable to use either pail or prayer. One lady, writing many years afterwards about the terrible Edinburgh fire of 1700, said:—"I cannot tell what effect this dispensation had upon my spirit; I thought it dang me stupid and senseless in the time of it, so that I could not so much as pour out a prayer for the quenching of it." Thus wrote Elizabeth Wast in 1733.

But we do not laugh at the lady; we merely smile as we read the way she puts it. Anyone who has witnessed a mighty conflagration, even when he knows we are so well equipped with modern appliances, and have a thoroughly trained and well-disciplined body of firemen to help, is conscious of the awe-inspiring effect produced upon the mind. Just picture a fire of the kind now taking place at the west end of Princes Street, with a hurricane blowing from the west, and nothing but a few pails of water and the prayers of the people to stop it—why, it might extend to Leith! And I am afraid that no amount of "wet cow-hides, too, thrown into the flames"—as we hear of an Edinburgh fire having been extinguished—would put a stop to the course of such a one as I have suggested.

But now for the history of the fire-mark, which, although it has nothing to do with the actual inventions of appliance for stopping the progress of a fire, has much to do, as we

* In Sherborne Abbey Church, I have been told, there is a fire-bell inscribed, "J. W. T. C., 1652," with the following irreverent couplet:—

"Lord quench this furious flame,
Arise, run, help, put out the same."

shall see, with there being a prompt attendance at the spot after the cry of "fire!" is raised.

And when we who have nothing whatever to do with the insurance world, and know next to nothing of the practice of that very large and useful body of people, consider for a moment how enormous must be the operation of even a single insurance company dealing with hundreds of thousands of pounds over the many and various losses incurred by a wide-spreading fire—one company alone has advanced the plea that losses suffered by the community through fire have been made good in the course of a century to the extent of £32,000,000—we are, I think, fully justified in looking back to the small beginnings of the older fire offices and countenancing their "marks" by including them, when they are available, in our national and municipal museums.

I do not think anyone can tell us who it was that first conceived the idea of a fire-mark being fixed on a house. We know that an obelisk was erected a good many years ago on Putney Common by the City of London, in commemoration of the invention of fire-plates for insuring buildings against fire. Mr. Dawson has shown me a photograph taken from an engraving of that monument. We are told that it was shortly after the Great Fire of London (1666) when "a business of granting insurance against the risk of fire on buildings" was first instituted, I believe, by one Nicholas Barbon, a doctor, who started that business in 1667, and was associated with it until 1680, and then turned it into a company called "The Fire Office."

This company was the first to maintain a fire-brigade, and the fire-marks were made for it and issued to insurers with a view of assisting its brigade.

The three deceased writers, viz., Walford, Griswold (of America), and Relton, have already told the insurance world all it *can* know (with the exception of the name of him

who first conceived them) about the early history of fire-marks. Mr. C. T. Davis, Mr. Percy Collins, and one or two others have of late years taken up the subject and tried to make the public familiar with it, using as their medium for so doing, not only the privately published magazines of some of the fire insurance companies, but several of those which we see on the book-stalls.

As I have implied in my preface, the general reader—and I might include with him some of our keen collectors—would have to wade through two or more very dry volumes relating to the history of insurance, and hunt up an enormous number of magazines and papers, before he would gain a complete knowledge of the subject.

A distinction has been drawn by several collectors between the fire-mark and the fire-plate. In this book of mine I have been biassed by that opinion; yet, for brevity's sake, I have selected "fire-marks"—the general term for all objects of the kind—by which the book must be known. On the other hand, they must have been talked of in William Cowper's day (1731 to 1800) by the name of "plates," see p. 13. *Fire-marks*, however, amongst collectors, imply the early "leads" of distinct use and value, *fire-plates* being the later copper, cast-iron, or tinned-iron things which were in most cases merely a relic of the "mark," and were used chiefly for advertisement, though, as I have explained later on, even some of these, notably the Norwich Union plates, served still the purpose of the marks of yore, other metals taking the place of lead. Within the last twenty years plates have been nailed up against houses, for the sake of advertisement only, by several companies. I learn that abroad this practice is still indulged in, and by some British offices; but it was by the year 1860, or a little before, that the majority of companies had altogether abandoned the practice, seeing

there was no longer a *raison d'être* for it; and householders did not care to allow the frontage of their beautiful residences to serve as a medium for advertisement.

I quote here a passage from *A Chat About Fire-Marks*, by Mr. Percy Collins, who explains in an amusing way the origin of the fire-mark.

"The shareholders of the first fire office, started, remember, for the purposes of business with the object of making a profit, would not have been such philanthropic idiots as to keep up an expensive brigade to extinguish fires on *any* one's property. No, this brigade was formed for two reasons; firstly, as an inducement to people to insure because of its protection, and secondly, to enable the company to save as much property as possible, and thus reduce the losses. Consequently, the fire-mark was invented for the purposes of, and used as, a guide to the brigade.

"If, in the event of a fire, a brigade arriving on the scene found it was not their office that insured the risk, and that no surrounding property in which they were interested seemed to be in danger, they went home again, perhaps to bed, and left the fire-fiend to be fought either by the brigade belonging to the insuring company or by the public if no insurance existed.

"This state of things lasted up to about the end of the 18th century, when, from various causes, the brigades of the various companies began to attend fires generally, and (now we come to the transition stage of the decline of the fire-mark into the fire-plate) fire-marks were no longer a necessity, and fire-plates began to be affixed, their sole object and purpose being that of advertisement."

The earlier *marks* were all stamped, painted or pierced (in the case of one office) with the policy number; the majority of the *plates* bore no number.

Mr. Collins states that one company issued terra-cotta marks. They must be very scarce.

We gather from the minute-book of an old office that the sum of half-a-crown was charged for each fire-mark, which only cost the company fourteen-pence halfpenny; but Mr. Collins, who is my authority for this statement, believes the amount included cost of fixing it on the wall.

The same writer continues:—

“We thus see that *the fixing of the fire-mark was part of the contract of fire insurance*. The ‘Friendly’ Society (London) in 1684 said in their proposals that ‘*to prevent fraud in getting any policy after a house is burnt, no house is to be esteemed a secure house till the mark hath been actually fixed thereon.*’

“Originally, when policies lapsed, the messenger took the marks down, and they were renumbered and re-issued.”

I myself have come across several marks which show on the panels below that a new policy number had been stamped over the old one.

Some writers, who had not thoroughly grasped the subject, have laid too much stress upon this point, that wall-plates made of lead are always genuine *fire-marks*. I have not yet come across a genuine mark issued previous to 1760 that was made of any other metal but lead, but I have seen many wall-plates issued between that date and 1824 which were made of tinned-iron or copper, and undoubtedly served the purpose of *marks*; and again, I have seen a good many made of lead which were but *fire-plates* in the collector’s accepted sense of the word. Several companies in Ireland, established in 1824 or after that date, issued plates made of lead, *e.g.*, the Patriotic, the Royal Irish, and the Shamrock.

Of course if the new system of fire-brigades which commenced to spread over England and Scotland about the year 1824 had not reached Ireland, then these leaden plates might after all have been true marks.

The British, which came into existence in 1799, never issued a leaden mark, but it would probably have its own brigade, and would attend only fires at houses insured by it, thus its plate is entitled to the name of a *mark*.

The Sun Office, at the end of the third quarter of the 18th century, issued true marks made of tinned iron, with policy

numbers stamped upon them. The Norwich General issued marks of copper with policy numbers thereon at the same time as the Norwich Union was turning out leaden marks.

A company called the Albion, which started in 1805, said they would not issue fire-marks, "as they were at that time used by the other companies only as an advertisement."

Such a notice as this clearly shows that in London and a few other big towns a transitional period in the history of the fire-mark had been reached. We may roughly fix the period around the year 1800.

Without taking into account colonial companies and those of foreign parts transacting business in the United Kingdom—and there are not a few of these—I find, after running my eye through the *Insurance Directory* ("Post Magazine") of 1909, that there are no less than 106 companies which to-day insure against fire. Only about 20 of these issued at one time or other in their existence marks or plates associated with their own name, but many other companies which once, too, could boast of their emblems on marks have merged into these, while others have died out altogether.

It was about thirteen years ago when there was published in *Caledonian Jottings* what was considered then a complete list of all those fire offices which had at one time or other issued marks or plates. Here we are confronted with 103 offices, dating back—the earliest of them—to the 17th century. Let me remark, for the benefit of those who get mixed up on such a point, that the 17th century embraces all dates after 1599 A.D., commencing with the figures 16, and not, as Mr. William Cooke (who wrote for the *Journal of the Insurance Institute of Ireland*) would give his readers to understand, by the figures 17—a common error this.

The compiler of that list has, however, omitted many of the old Irish offices.

The up-to-date list should include 110 DIFFERENT FIRE OFFICES KNOWN TO HAVE ISSUED MARKS OR PLATES OR BOTH.

And these offices between them are known to have issued 253 VARIANTS of their marks and plates, which means that he who would have a complete collection must not cease until he secures that number. Some years ago Mr. A. B. Dawson, whose collection was looked upon as the largest at that time in the world, had gathered together 161 of these variants, exclusive of a very large number of colonial and foreign fire-plates; but he has added to his collection since then, and yet, even now, he has nothing like a complete set. The same may be said of the fine collections owned by Messrs. G. W. Bain, P. Collins and C. T. Davis, who all run Mr. Dawson very close.

THE LITERATURE OF FIRE-MARKS



FEW people, comparatively speaking, are aware that there ever was such a thing as a fire-mark. So far no book dealing with fire-marks alone has been published, though mention of not a few of them may be found in two distinct volumes concerning the

history of British insurance.

Several people, too, connected with insurance work have contributed articles and notes to various periodicals, but the average reader is still in the dark about these interesting objects, never having had his attention specially drawn to them. The antiquary, too, in his museum remains unsatisfied, and is inclined to look upon them—such as have come before his notice—as mere trade-marks of modern times, unworthy of his attention, and yet they, the earlier ones, take us back to a period closely following the Great Fire of London.

As I have said above, what has been written concerning the early *history* of fire-marks is practically all we shall ever

know, or require to know, about it; it is but a short history, and simple enough.

The following is a list of books, periodicals, papers, and magazines where accounts of sundry fire-marks may be found, but it by no means exhausts the whole of what has been said—the majority of which is but repetition—for most of the offices which run a magazine are sure to have referred to their own particular marks and plates, prefacing their notes with some general remarks, and it would be an arduous task to search out all the jottings that from time to time have appeared in them.

1. Walford's *Cyclopædia of Insurance*.
2. Relton's *History of Fire Insurance*.
3. *The Chronicle* (December 24, 1891), The Chronicle Co., Ltd., 33 Pine Street, New York.
4. *The Chronicle* (1893).
5. *The Insurance Times* (May 1894), 29 Broadway, New York.
6. "The Post Magazine Almanack"—*The Insurance Directory* (1897).
7. *The Boys' Own Paper* (July 17, 1897).
8. *Caledonian Jottings* (April 1, 1898).
9. *The Connoisseur* (May 1902).
10. *Country Life* (April 24, 1909).
11. *The Norwich Union Magazine*.
12. *The Strand Magazine* (November 1893).
13. *Journal of the Insurance Institute of Ireland* (1898-1904).

These are the only names* which I can recall of people who have written upon fire-marks, viz., Messrs. Walford, F. B.

* Mr. Lawrence Weaver, F.S.A., has written a book entitled *English Leadwork, its Art and History*. All he has to say about fire-marks is that "there is a good collection at the London Guildhall, including signs of the Hand-in-Hand, the London, and the Sun Office."

Relton, J. Griswold, W. Coote, Percy Collins, G. W. Bain, Sidney Greenwood, H. B. Wheatley, and C. T. Davis. The last named has been responsible for several very useful and instructive papers; he looks upon the whole subject with the eye of a keen antiquary.

Since Mr. Jeremiah Griswold has joined the great majority, and as he had done more than anyone over the water to further the interest taken in fire-marks, I would take this opportunity of writing a few words about him.

He was born in 1814 at Burlington, seventeen miles west of the city of Hartford, Connecticut, U.S.A.

Griswold was the first in the States to write intelligently, or even at all, as far as I can gather, upon this subject. He classified fire-marks according to date of establishment of their respective offices, for which they stood as emblems.

He was widely known among fire-underwriters as the author of various standard works on the law and practice of fire insurance. He styled himself an "Insurance Journalist," and was a prolific contributor to American journals.

A Christmas number of *The Chronicle* (1891) contains a long paper by him of twelve closely-printed pages dealing with "Fire Insurance Companies and their Emblems; House-Marks or Badges; Trade-Marks, Plaques, or House-Plates of Ancient and Modern Times."

The author there discusses American as well as foreign and British marks; and in the holiday number, 1893, of the same paper he continues the subject in a short account.

Griswold added considerably to what had already been written on the same subject. Of the forty-five miniature prints, however, accompanying his notes, only ten illustrate *British* fire-marks; so even America has not yet anticipated us on that score. I venture to think that the apparent interest taken by those over the water in our ancient "leads," some of which still face the elements on rickety old houses,

will cause them to revel in this volume of pictures, as true—so good critics inform me—to art as they are faithful to the quaint objects themselves.

In 1893 the late Mr. F. B. Relton published "*An Account of the Fire Insurance Companies, Associations, Institutions, Projects, and Schemes established and projected in Great Britain and Ireland during the 17th and 18th Centuries.*"

Relton was associated with the old Sun Fire Office, and was secretary-manager, which enabled him to become familiar with the history of contemporary offices and their several peculiarities at that early day. He is said to impart his knowledge very pleasantly to his readers, and indulge in great precision of detail.

I have so far not seen the work. Griswold mentions that he was a personal correspondent of his, and the American also refers to having corresponded with Mr. A. Bashall Dawson, now residing at 33 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh, whom he called "an enthusiastic collector of fire insurance antiquities," and said he was "indebted to him for a number of valuable, rare old badges or house-plates."

THE POETRY OF FIRE-MARKS



GUARDIANS of our language, the poets have not omitted to record the term *fire-plate*. What doesn't come into poetry? Certainly fire-marks, or *fire-plates* — the name they evidently bore towards the end of the 18th century — have found a place there, and even so great a poet as

Cowper has condescended to allude to them.

It was Mr. Sydney Greenwood who first drew our special attention to the lines of the Hertfordshire poet, when he wrote "Great London Fires" for the *Strand Magazine* (November 1893). Mr. Greenwood says that "Friendship" was written at Olney, in Oxfordshire, in 1782. These are the lines in it, with the allusion to the old Hand-in-Hand Fire Office:—

*"A friendship, that in frequent fits
Of controversial rage emits
The sparks of disputation,
Like hand-in-hand insurance plates,
Most unavoidably creates
The thoughts of conflagration."*

Cowper's is a very cleverly thought out simile, which practically tells us the meaning of those fire-plates.

The American author, Jeremiah Griswold, in 1891, was the first—of quite recent times at any rate—to remind us in *The Chronicle* of that graphic description in verse of a fire at the very beginning of the 19th century, for which James and Horace Smith were responsible.

In 1809 the Old Drury Lane Theatre was burned to the ground for the third time, and on the occasion of its being reopened (in 1812), those two clever people gave to the world a prelude entitled *Rejected Addresses, or the New Theatrum Poetarum*. Some of the verses* run as follows:—

"The summon'd firemen woke at call,
And hied them to their stations all;
Starting from short and broken snooze,
Each sought his pond'rous hob-nailed shoes;
But first his worsted hozen plied,
Plush breeches next, in crimson dyed,
His nether bulk embraced;
Then jacket thick, of red or blue,
Whose massy shoulder gave to view
The badge of each respective crew,
In tin or copper traced.
The engines thunder'd through the street,
Fire-hook, pipe, bucket, all complete,
And torches glared, and clattering feet
Along the pavement paced.

.
The 'Hand-in-Hand' the race begun,
Then came the 'Phoenix' and the 'Sun,'
Th' 'Exchange,' where old insurers run,
The 'Eagle,' where the new."

Griswold adds a note saying, "other fire offices were represented there with their engines, but presumably they were omitted because their names could not be made to

* Transcribed from "The Olive Books" series (George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.).

jingle in the rhyme." * The "London Assurance" (established 1720) had at that fire an able body of uniformed firemen, as did the "Union Fire" or "Double Hand-in-Hand," as it was called, of 1714 foundation.

In his *Strand* account Mr. Greenwood has referred us to other four lines of verse alluding to the study of fire offices and their "marks."

*"For not e'en the Regent himself has endured
(Though I've seen him badges and orders all shine,
Till he looked like a house that was over insured)
A much heavier burden of glories than mine."*

These lines have been quoted in two or three papers. It is a well-known fact that certain householders were in the habit of insuring with several offices, which would account for more than one fire-mark being seen on some houses. In some cases old marks were not removed, as they ought to have been, which also might give rise to this superabundance of decoration.

Although there is no mention of an actual fire-mark—there would not at that time be a single "mark" of the kind in the city—I will include in this chapter part of a poem, written over two hundred years ago, which gives an account of a terrible Edinburgh fire. The title is, *The Dreadful Voice of Fire, begun at Edinburgh the 3rd of February 1700.*

*"In Rob'son's Land, 'bout Ten a cloak at Night,
Happ'n'd a Fire, soon shining clear and bright;
And in a Trice, from North-East, did o'erspread,
The Fabrick whole, well covered with Lead;
And as if pinch'd in narrow bounds it went,
Streight for St. Geil's; but soon it did repent,
And stayed at the Statue, thence did flee
North ward to th' Croce, to serve its Luxury."*

* Had Griswold referred to another page of *Rejected Addresses*, he would have found that the "The Globe" and "Atlas," "Hope" and "Albion," were all "made to jingle in the rhyme." (See Appendix, p. 185, *Ibid.*).

*How it did Triumph o'er the sturdy Oak ?
 And did obscure fair Cynthia, by its smook ?
 Dislodging soon the loving Man and Wife,
 The Family and Children, without strife ;
 From Babel's Tow'rs them sending to the deep
 Of saddest Plight, yea some amidst their sleep.
 Vulcan was now inexorable grown ;
 Nor Piety nor Riches would he oune :
 Best gifts of Heav'n and Earth he did disdain,
 Threatening with blood, his Fury to maintain ;
 And deaf as Adria, did neglect the Cryes,
 Of rich and poor, all in deep Miseryes ;
 Yea did invade the day of Holy Rest,
 And so the Toun, with hideous flames, molest.
 He raged so, so domineered he,
 As, but himself, no other god could be.
 At last, by Holy Pray'rs he was appeas'd,
 And then his force and cruel fury ceus'd.
 Hence learn, ye Mortals, what great Madness be,
 To build up houses thrice five stories high,
 Or to put Trust in any Earthly Thing,
 Save in Great God, of Heav'n and Earth the King ;
 But trust in Him alone, who can defend
 You, from sad accidents, and dreadful end ;
 And now repent, and to the Lord now turn,
 Lest He should you, in Flames eternal, burn."*

I must apologise for intruding amongst the poets, but this parody of my own muse on a stanza to be found in Dr. Percy's ballad, *The Birth of St. George*, refers to a beautiful little lead displaying the arms of the Royal Burgh of Dundee—azure, a pot of lilies ppr :—

*Fair as the earliest flower of Spring,
 Such is the lily's mien :
 And, on that leaden fire-mark stamp,
 The Dundee arms are seen.*

FIRE-MARKS IN ILLUSTRATION



O antiquarian subject that I know of has received so little attention at the hands of the artist as that given to the engrossing subject of fire-marks.

It is scarcely worth my publisher's while to reserve a space in this book for the very few notes I

have to record about previous illustrations. I could paste the lot on a sheet of paper less than 2 feet square!—and I feel I am not exaggerating. I do not, however, include on that 24 square inches a print after one of Hogarth's pictures. William Hogarth (born 1697, died 1764), with his inexhaustible fund of invention and satire, was one of the first, if not the very first, to notice the fire-mark in picture, and so add to its historical associations. I can recall the print but not the title, and I know that amongst many other things it portrays the "*Double Hand-in-Hand*" of the old Union Fire Office (established 1714).

A little copper plate, printed by Norris and Son of

15 Broker Row, Moorfields, shows the fireman's badge of the *Sun*, as well as a manual engine and a fire-plate fixed on to a bag. The print is of special interest, as it shows, too, the complete "kit" of the fireman worn in the early days of the Georges.

Another picture, which I must also not include on my small sheet of paper, is a coloured print showing a fire in London and several engines representing different companies hastening to the scene. Although the signs and symbols of one or two offices are indicated here, they are quite subordinate to the rest of the picture.

But the little lot of which I am thinking is a batch of small photographs and a few very poor sketches—in some cases amounting almost to diagrams—of some of the better known fire-marks and fire-plates which have appeared in an American paper called *The Chronicle*, in *Fire and Water*, *The Boys' Own Paper*, *The Strand Magazine*, *The Connoisseur*, *Country Life*, and one or two privately circulated magazines edited by insurance officials.

The photographs in *The Connoisseur* and *Country Life* are good, but some of them are too small, and do not quite satisfy the antiquary;—the objects might be made of any metal, and much of the detail is not well recognised.

And that is all I have to say about the previous illustrations of *British Fire-Marks*.

COLLECTORS OF FIRE-MARKS



COLLECTORS of fire-marks may be counted almost on the fingers of one hand. By this I imply *giant* collectors, men who have made them a study, and have gone into the subject thoroughly, and are eager to secure every variant of each fire office's emblem.

There are many who possess a few marks and plates, and who would like to add to these, but it is well-nigh impossible now for them to do this, so fast are these things being improved away.

It will be seen, when the authorities of museums wake up to the fact that such things are of genuine, and, perhaps, general antiquarian interest, that it will be out of their power to gather together a sufficient number worthy of the name of a collection.

The largest collection in the world, as far as we know, is that belonging to Mr. A. Bashall Dawson. Many a visit have I paid to 33 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh—one of that handsome Grecian façade of houses designed by Playfair in

1820—on purpose to lose myself in his remarkable mass of old lead, copper and tin.

On not a few occasions, too, Mr. Dawson has lent me specimens to take home and sketch. I was in the habit of carrying back to him what I had drawn, and would bring a fresh supply home again with me in one journey. Twice I remember likening myself to a much over-weighted 'chaser, for I carried 20 lbs. of lead on each of those occasions, travelling at the deuce of a pace a distance of half as much again as the 'national course, and scarcely feeling the "lead," so eager was I to get home and commence sketching something new.

As Mr. Dawson's collection has never been discussed before on paper, let me take this opportunity of saying something about it.

I have not seen the giant collection of Mr. G. W. Bain, an insurance broker of Sunderland, who is a great authority on fire-marks, nor have I had the pleasure of examining those of Mr. Percy Collins, another insurance broker of London, and Mr. C. T. Davies of Wandsworth, so that I am unable to contrast their methods of arranging the marks and plates with that adopted by Mr. Dawson. His, however, I believe, is quite original and unique. But I have seen the fine collections of Mr. H. J. Stevenson, secretary of the North British and Mercantile, and Mr. A. Pordage, the Edinburgh firemaster, and I am therefore able to compare theirs with Mr. Dawson's.

In the opinion of an antiquary, Mr. Stevenson does not improve his collection, if I may say so, by mounting his marks on wooden shields. There was a time when university men were accustomed to have fastened upon wooden shields the tin escutcheons with the arms of their respective colleges emblazoned thereon. We now prefer to see the tin escutcheons hanging alone without the extra and

cumbersome wood. The same applies to fire-marks; but with them it is more important still to have them free and unattached; for does not the true collector love to take up and handle carefully all over the object so close to his heart?

By examining the back of a fire-mark or plate I have more than once been able to prove whether it is a genuine specimen or not. After a "fake" has been screwed down on to a shield, the connoisseur even, in some cases, is debarred from coming to a right conclusion about it.

My advice is—*Never mount a fire-mark on a shield* unless it has reached you in bits—and this occasionally happens—or is so fragile that it requires some support.

Again—*Never repaint a fire-mark or plate*, never be so vandalic as to change the face, or even freshen it up by a coat of varnish. Let it remain as it came to you, unless you see that it has received several coats of house paint unnatural to it, when it is better to scrape and clean all that carefully off, and come down on to the bare lead, copper, iron, or tin, whatever the metal may be. Colours of fire-marks and fire-plates are not like those of coats of arms—they for the most part mean nothing, and they are better off than on when extra colouring in the shape of house paint or the dust and dirt of a century debars you from recognising the details of the cast. In the case of many of the old and rare leaden marks, they were gilded all over, so that, as gold leaf is not likely to have lasted a couple of hundred years exposed to the elements, one may be pretty safe in scraping "down to the bone" without being in the least a vandal.

Mr. Pordage nails his collection of marks and plates in two rows up against a cream distemper wall, above a picture rail. There they rest as a kind of frieze, quaint and decorative, and can be taken down and looked at all over at any moment when required.

The same collector, however—and I know he will not object to my saying so—was once a trifle too fond of paint and touching up; but he sees the value now of leaving his new additions alone.

Mr. Dawson, almost from the very start—and he commenced to collect in 1889—has liked to treat his property in its original state, so that when you are ushered into his upstairs room—his museum—for the first time, you might imagine yourself surrounded by so many scraps of metal brought straight from the underground premises of an Old Town dealer's shop. Most of his marks have scarcely had the brush over them; many still harbour in the crevices of the cast the smoke and dirt of the Cowgate and Canon-gate, which had accumulated there, in some cases, for at least 150 years.

The four walls of his large room are literally draped with these quaint things. There are between four and five hundred of them, including a collection of foreign and colonial plates. Suspended from the top of each wall are five or six rows of picture rails, and hanging by a piece of string from each of these are the marks and plates.

Without taking them down, one can handle and turn each round at leisure. *En masse*, they present a somewhat weird yet interesting appearance.

When we think of the time and the thought expended over such a gigantic collection, and how little it is known to the outside world—scarcely at all, even to insurance people or the suspicious antiquary—we are inclined to wonder whether our country is really larger than we give it credit for being.

It has, besides, been Mr. Dawson's pleasure to make an album of paper casts from many of his best specimens. For these he uses thick grocer's paper, soaks it in hot water, presses it with his finger points against the metal,

and leaves it to dry on the mark. In the case of the copper and tin fire-plates, he finds he can often get a better cast by applying the paper to the *back* of the plate. When these are dry he can send them off to his acquaintance at a distance, and in this way saves himself the trouble of writing a full description of the plates. It is quite a treat to turn over the pages of such a rare kind of album.

Another collector, whose name I have not yet mentioned in this chapter, is Mr. W. Coote, of Dublin. He owned at one time the most complete collection in existence of Irish fire-marks and plates, and has written pleasantly about them in an Irish insurance journal.

A word now as to how some collectors have come by their treasures. I shall be divulging no secrets, for the parties in question have amusingly recorded some of their experiences fire-mark hunting in the pages of certain magazines and newspapers, and have made a most candid confession of their crimes; so much so that it is a wonder they were allowed to be where they were to tell the tales!

A gentleman in the north of England appears to have had many escapades in "the dangerous hobby of collecting marks." He even insinuates that for a while he lost his "respectability," when he offered a short-haired *stranger* who had "done time" some financial inducements to obtain the objects of his love. He felt, somehow, that he was an accomplice, and that he, too, if the *stranger* was caught, might be brought before the Bench, and would run a poor chance of regaining his liberty for a month or two.

If he could not himself get a tenant of a house, where he had spotted a rare "mark," to *give* him the "ugly old bit of lead or copper spoiling the look of the house," he would offer five shillings for it. The tenant would hand him on to the landlord, who, ten to one, cared nothing about the thing, but, when he found it was worth five

shillings to the collector, declared it should be worth more to him, the owner. Our friend, rightly enough, would put such a fellow down as a curmudgeon, and would at once set the *stranger* on the track of the mark. Of course next morning the tenant would get up to find his landlord's "ugly bit of lead or copper" no longer "spoiling the look of the house." But the collector and his accomplice were far away by that time.

At a later date the same collector fell in with another and even shorter-haired *stranger*, with whom he arranged terms, outlined likely localities, and left the fellow to his own sweet devices. Two days afterwards a couple of ruffianly-looking men presented themselves at his office counter and asked for the "boss." Well, to cut the collector's story short, he found himself in possession of "a *Phoenix* in lead and an early numbered *Newcastle* in lead, many varieties of the *Royal Exchange*, all lead—Great Scot! what an agency they must have held!—two *Districts* in copper, a very early *Sun* in lead, etc., etc."—and all of these out of a carpenter's tool-basket of ample dimensions!

The *strangers* were only once stopped, they said. One of them was up a ladder, when a party asked him what he was doing there. The cool answer was, "A'm takkin' this 'ere insurance thing dowan, an' a'm goin' to putt a noo enomel (enamel) ane up in its plaâce,—an' 'e said na mair."

But all this sort of thing was in the young wild days of his hobby-hunting; he now *gangs mair warily*.

I know of another collector who employed a labouring man to go round a large city in his "leisure time" and secure a good many rare fire-marks. I heard he was rather proud of this feat, and thinking the same proceeding might be conducted in other towns and villages, wrote an account of it to a newspaper and inquired of the readers if they, too, thought it could be managed, adding that it was a difficult

matter to secure such a person! A facetious fellow smartly picked "Inquirer" up in a succeeding paper when he wrote, "So he would have a man trot round each town and village with a ladder, lamp-lighter-like! For enthusiasm in collecting he beats all other collectors hollow."

While most of us, I am quite sure, would not advocate such means for scooping in fire-marks, in justice to those two collectors and others who may have adopted a similar mode of procuring them, I would like to say that the majority of fire-marks and fire-plates, however well they may look *inside* a house or in a museum, were not considered by the original owners to be ornamental, especially in the very conspicuous position they took up on the front of houses. Some would pass muster; some of the oldest leads even, in my opinion, looked well; but, as I have inferred, the bulk of them, particularly those of 19th century date, were, if anything, eyesores. It was for this reason that many householders took theirs down and threw them away, and others were only too glad to get any one else to save them that trouble. Scarcely a soul ten years ago put the slightest value upon them, and it is only to-day that the average man we meet is beginning to learn from the papers what the "funny little things" are. Ninety per cent. have never even noticed the few that do remain *in situ*.

Fire-mark hunting, therefore, under the above conditions cannot exactly be looked upon as a serious crime in the moral sense of the words, though it undoubtedly would be considered such from a legal standpoint should any householder wish to bring his case forward. In the eyes of the public it would probably be looked upon as a lighter offence than cat-killing, and certainly infinitely less grave than nose-nobbling in our beautiful abbeys and cathedrals!

With regard to the market value of the fire-mark, no one would at present be in a position to answer that

question. The metal insurance emblem, to my knowledge, has not yet been brought under the hammer in an auction-room, where several ardent collectors between them could have an opportunity of determining its true value. In an antique-dealer's shop I have seen a fairly early *Sun* priced at five shillings, what seems to be a moderate price; but then there must be a number of *Suns* still not set, so enormous has been the distribution of those particularly quaint and even ornamental "leads," which accounts for their being not uncommon.

A dealer offered me—but I have never been a collector, nor even a buyer—a "Friendly," one of the old Edinburgh marks, at what I thought was an exceedingly low price. The policy number was below 1000; it was, therefore, issued previous to the date 1780, and it was in a very excellent state of preservation. The price he would have taken for it was half-a-crown. A *London Assurance* of about the same date, rather earlier, I could have purchased for less than nine shillings in an Edinburgh shop. With the exception of this one, I, personally, have seen no marks or plates in an antique shop with a higher price put upon them; but I am well aware that the dealers do not now possess the rare ones. We know of a few for which a giant collector would give a high price so as to make his collection more complete. There happens to be one Irish and one Scotch mark—the one a lead, the other of tinned iron—which a five-pound note most certainly would not purchase. Only one of each is known to exist—lucky Mr. Coote, lucky Mr. Pordage, to possess such treasures!

Then Lord Rosebery's *Deo Juvante* (No. 10)—which in our time at any rate is never likely to have its value tested in an auction-room—would be considered a truly great prize to any collector, being the earliest known mark (1767) issued by a Scotch office. Mr. Dawson is the happy



THE "LADY STAIR" FIRE-MARK 1767.

It was a strange coincidence that on the very day the last sheets for this book were being printed, I should have had the opportunity of sketching the above fire-mark, the most interesting one in Scotland—

Lord Rosebery boasts that welter-weight,
A "Friendly" hand-in-hand—
A "Deo Juvante" No. 10,
The oldest in the land.

Hearing that I was interested in insurance fire-marks and would like to portray the only specimen which he possessed, Lord Rosebery had done me the honour of inviting me out to lunch with him at Dalmeny, so that he might show it to me himself in his large and beautiful Museum at Barnbogle.

While carrying the 9½ lbs. of lead through the park from the Castle to the library at Dalmeny, I was explaining to Lord Rosebery that all these old "marks" had originally been gilded, with here and there a little colour introduced. We noticed the remains of red paint, to which I have referred on page 85, but nothing else excepting some *harl* (rough-cast) which still adhered to it about the tails of the scroll, until the extra sharp eyes of the Earl's seven-year-old grandson pointed out to me specks of gold leaf in several places. The young antiquary had certainly added *gold*, in a double sense of the word, to his grandfather's treasure.

owner of the next oldest, issued probably in the same week and put up on a wall by the same hand, viz., a No. 17 *Deo Juvante*.

Since handing my MS. to the publishers, I held an exhibition of all these drawings at No. 40 Ormidale Terrace, Murrayfield, the residence of a friend, Mrs. Macneal, Senior, of Ugadale.

A number of people were drawn together there to witness the absolutely unique collection, which was enhanced by the loan of a good many of the rarest fire-marks themselves.

An ardent collector who graced the show, and one who holds an important post in a Scottish city, amused me much by saying he had been forced several times in the past to nail back on the walls of houses the things which his firemark-mania had caused him to appropriate. Rather humiliating for a man of position!

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FIRE-MARKS



DESCRIPTION of fire-marks, but *not* a full one, may be gathered from the pages of two books dealing with the history of insurance companies, and sundry periodicals and privately issued magazines.

Bit by bit these descriptions have come before the present-day insur-

ance world, but the majority of them *without* illustration. Yet so far, as I have already implied, the general reader, the antiquary, and even the insurance official who takes a delight in collecting these objects, have previously never been able to run through the pages of one book and find there all, or at any rate nearly all, that they require to know. Each of the giant collectors whose names I have mentioned has in all probability made up a private MS. book of his own. I know that Mr. Dawson has done this, and he has kindly allowed me to make free use of it; I believe, too, that Mr. Davis had revised it for him at one time, so that the dates which appear there of establishment

of each office, the amalgamations of one office with another, the absorptions or deaths of companies, and so on, may be looked upon as accurate, especially as Mr. Dawson himself had run through Walford's *Cyclopædia* and Relton's *History of Insurance*. Here and there my small amount of research has enabled me to add to this knowledge. My own drawings and the observations I have made upon the marks and plates before me are, however, my chief additions to the subject. By the introduction of these very careful drawings I have saved myself a somewhat useless and laborious task, that of describing in full every little detail. In some cases I have left out the description altogether, while in others it is but a very rough one; the drawings themselves are intended as the chief guide to the collector.

Where in the illustrations certain dates appear, the reader must understand they are not intended for the dates of the individual fire-marks; they indicate the date of establishment of the office; and where more than one date occurs, the other ones point to important periods in the history of that office, some of which are notified in the text under each office.

The number of variants of each mark or plate is even now not absolutely decided. Much information has been added since Walford and Relton discussed fire-marks. I have been guided chiefly by a type-written list made by Mr. Percy Collins some years ago, a copy of which Mr. Dawson had lent me. I was able to add to the list, and also to correct it here and there. I found it a remarkably useful one; it must have taken Mr. Collins a long time to produce such a list. From it I have been able to insert under each heading the number of variants as far as we know they have been found to exist. Others, no doubt, in course of time and research will be added to them, for fire-marks are still, in some respects, a green field to the antiquary.

With regard to the designing of fire-marks, Mr. C. T. Davis has been tempted to divide them into four distinct groups:—

1. Those which have in the “field” some object connected with fire.
2. Those which are emblematical of the name of the company.
3. Heraldic.
4. Miscellaneous—that limbo to which all unclassable things are consigned.

This is as good a classification, I think, as one could well conceive, and I leave the collector to arrange his own marks as he pleases under these four headings.

If such things are described in detail at all, the description should be an accurate one, or a careful illustration should take its place. One author, referring to the design of a variant of the Beacon, is very brief but very wrong when he writes:—“A woman and child looking *at* a fire.” This is all he has to say about one of the most interesting and original of all the designs before us—certainly one of the cleverest conceptions—and well carried out in relief it is too. That writer would have been more graphic and more correct had he thus described it:—A woman weeping and turning *away* from a house still on fire, with a baby on her knee and a child at her side, and a good angel (of the insurance company) in attendance with a bag of gold that has been dropped at the sorrowing widow’s feet.*

Some one once whispered to me that insurance companies between them all did not display much originality in their

* It often happens that an old fire-plate is covered with many coats of house paint. It is advisable, if the collector does not care to take off all this paint, to turn it over and examine the reverse side, which is sure to give a sharper contour to the design than that seen on the obverse. Casts, too, are often best made from this side.

marks and plates. Looking at my sixty drawings, which I have before me as I write, I cannot altogether agree with him; a considerable amount of thought and ingenuity has been expended over these designs. It is true that in not a few cases the artist has been influenced by previous conception; but is this not so with all designers?—Who can claim absolute originality for *all* his work?

In some of the earliest marks I have certainly detected the influence brought to bear upon them by simple designs conceived long before the end of the 17th century. Take, for example, the imperial crown and the clasped hands of the Hand-in-Hand. The badges of the sovereign were in some cases very similar in arrangement, and these may be seen on many Royal warrants. The earliest Tudor rose and crown—known as the “Crowned Tudor Rose,” which is reproduced in *Prince Arthur's Book*—appears to have been the prototype of the above, which has merely substituted the clasped hands for the rose. Later the Royal badges show the crown and rose, or thistle or shamrock, each separate; but this particular one shows them united, as in the case of the crown and the emblem of the Hand-in-Hand. The large design of the rose, thistle, and shamrock, beneath the crown, which those who have been to the Tower of London will have seen on the tunic of the Beef-eater—covering nearly the whole of its front—is somewhat similar in arrangement to the badge of the old Hand-in-Hand.

The phoenix was by no means peculiar to the first fire office, which adopted it for a badge or mark. Being a mythical bird, he no doubt comes into very ancient design, though I myself have not seen him in picture earlier than in the badge of Jane Seymour of Tudor times. The same bird—and I refer now to an old print—was designed by William Rogers, the first English-born portrait engraver, to accompany the portrait of Queen Elizabeth, which is

hung in the British Museum. The date of it is about 1580. Roger's conception was largely influenced by a previous design, though the execution is undoubtedly that of no other engraver.

It would be as interesting to know who first conceived the idea of depicting a man's face in the sun as it would to learn the name and period of the person who first sketched the man in the moon. Some people imagine that the artist commissioned by the Sun office, about the year 1710, to design their fire-mark was the first to put a pair of eyes into that body which is the source of light. Now, I know but little of *really* ancient design, yet I do happen to know that William Stafford Howard, Earl of Stafford, in his *Grant of Supporters* (1720), had tricked there, in the margins, the eighteen badges belonging to the ancient family of which he was the representative; and one of these badges is a facsimile—even to the number and arrangement of the straight and wavy rays—of the emblem so very well known to nearly all the world, viz., that of the Sun Fire Office.

Lord Stafford's human "sun," then, dates back very much earlier than the 1710 "sun" of that office.*

"The sun in splendour," as the sun showing its rays is called in heraldry, was, of course—though without the man's face—one of the badges of Richard II., who died in 1399. "A sun over two anchors" (Gwillim) was one of the badges of Richard I., the king that also sported "the sprig of broom," the badge of the Plantagenet dynasty.

It is the delight of the antiquary to get at the beginning of everything, and that is my reason for citing just a few cases that come to my mind as I write, which may, perhaps, open the eyes further of the collector who wishes to study closely *all* that pertains to his fire-marks.

* See under heading—Sun Office (p. 165).

*A LIST OF OFFICES
PAST AND PRESENT, WHICH HAVE ISSUED FIRE-MARKS,
WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE LATTER*



ABERDEEN

Established 1825. Incorporated 1852, when its name was changed to
SCOTTISH PROVINCIAL.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate I.—An almost round copper plate (8 × 7 ins.), with “Aberdeen” over the arms of that city; *gules, three towers triple-towered within a double tressure counter-flowered argent.* Supporters.—*Two leopards proper.* Motto.—“*Bon accord.*” Beneath the shield, between it and the scroll, is what I take to be the face of the sun without rays. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson’s collection.

Remarks.—It will be noted that the designer of this plate was not well versed in heraldry, for the *fleurs de lis* of the double tressure are omitted throughout the whole length of the border, and there is a deceptive ornament above the shield taking the place of what might be a crest, though Aberdeen in 1825, to my knowledge, did not sport a crest of any description.

There appears, even now, to be some doubt as to whether the leopards should be both represented in profile or one in profile and the other *guardant*, but according to the entry at the Lyon Office they ought both to be in profile.

ALBERT

Established 1864.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—Head of Prince Albert.

ALLIANCE

Established 1824. This office has since its establishment absorbed many other companies which were in the habit of using fire-marks or fire-plates. Amongst these are the following:—The Insurance Company of Scotland (Fire Department) in 1847; Hants, Sussex, and Dorset Fire, 1864; Norwich Equitable, 1883; Scottish Imperial (Fire business), 1883; Royal Farmers (Life and Fire), 1888; Salop Fire, 1890; Shropshire and North Wales, 1890; Imperial Fire, 1902; Westminster Fire, 1906; and County Fire, 1906.

Number of variants—4 or more.

Description of Plate II.—A copper plate (9 ins. vertically, width of panel below 9 ins.) showing “a strong castle founded upon a rock,” with four towers each with a flag flying, and “Alliance” in raised letters on panel below. On a black background, the castle, flags, and rock all gilded, also groundwork behind black letters. The grass beneath castle painted green.

Another plate shows Charity succouring the poor and encircled by a garter. Since the first plates were issued the office has adopted the motto, “Multi societate tutiores,” best translated (so as to suit well an insurance company)—“In the association of many is safety.” Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson’s collection.

It will be of great interest to all my readers, I feel sure, when they learn that this particular plate—not a “mark,” you observe, hence of no intrinsic value—was *the* one with which Mr. Dawson, in 1889, started his collection, perhaps by now the largest and most complete in the whole world. Edinburgh people, too, will like to know where it came from. The late Mr. James Cowan, M.P. for Edinburgh, gave it to Mr. Dawson, who had often looked upon it with an eye of envy as he saw it daily between two windows of the first floor at 35 Royal Terrace. One can yet trace the mark on the wall of that house from which it was taken.



ALLIANCE (OF DUBLIN)

Established 1825. Died out 1836.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

ANCHOR (No. 1)

Established 1808. In 1811 merged into the old Norwich General Assurance Office, which was absorbed at a later date, in 1821, by the Norwich Union.

Number of variants—1.

*Description.—*A lead mark with policy number painted or gilded upon its panel, below the “anchor of hope.”

ANCHOR (No. 2)

Established 1849.

Number of variants—1.

*Description.—*An arched square with a panel beneath; in the arch an anchor, and on the panel “Fire and Life” (= “*a foul anchor erect*”). Size of copper plate, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ ins.

ATLAS

Established 1808. It absorbed the Manchester in 1904.

Number of variants—3.

Description of Plate III.—A copper plate ($10\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ ins.) showing Atlas supporting the globe. The colouring very gaudy—red background; white globe with enormously thick black lines of latitude and longitude; a gilded band round the globe upon which is “Atlas” in large black letters; the figure of Atlas gilded, with sky-blue drapery. Picturesque for a museum, but not exactly for the wall of an old Chester or York house, especially if a dozen or more houses in a row happened to be insured at that office—picture the eye-sore! Drawn from a specimen in Mr. H. J. Stevenson’s collection.

1888

1910





THE BATH

Established 1767. Subsequently known as the "Old Bath Fire Office." I am told the business was absorbed by the Sun in 1827.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—An exceedingly rare bit of lead; it is almost impossible to get hold of one, so Mr. A. B. Dawson, who owns a good specimen himself, has said. The arms of the city in a medallion was used by this office, with a panel for policy number below.

THE BATH SUN

Established in the 18th century.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate IV.—A lead mark (9 ins. vertically \times $6\frac{1}{4}$ ins.).

My drawing made from a fine leaden cast belonging to Mr. A. B. Dawson, who also possesses an original mark.

The other variant has not the Bath coat of arms, but "Bath Sun Fire" on semicircular label below.

THE BEACON

Established 1821. Transferred to the Protector in 1827. Walford, another writer, speaks of a "Beacon Fire Office (1852-56)."

Number of variants—3.

Description of Plate V.—A copper plate (11 ins. vertically \times $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins.), the design in very deep relief. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. H. J. Stevenson's collection.

Mr. Pordage's specimen ($9\frac{1}{2}$ ins. vertically \times 8 ins.), with figures and letters all gilded, the rest being red, is an older plate; the design differs slightly here and there from the above—more house yet to be burnt behind the figures, no smoke, all flames, and the angel not so well modelled.

THE BERKSHIRE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Established 1824. Transferred to the Phoenix, 1831.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—An elongated castle with a large flag; "Salus" underneath; and "Berks, Gloucestershire, etc.," round about it.



18

05



LATE VI

THE BIRMINGHAM ALLIANCE

Established 1864. In 1867 became Birmingham Fire Insurance Company, and transferred to the Lancashire in 1870.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—

THE BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT

Established —.

Number of variants—2.

*Description.—*The Birmingham coat of arms surrounded by a garter with “Birmingham” on it; “District” below.

THE BIRMINGHAM FIRE OFFICE

Established 1805. Transferred to the Lancashire in 1867.

Number of variants—4.

*Description of Plate VI.—*A copper plate. A fireman in full uniform standing full-face, his left arm bent across chest, right hand resting on an axe, in front of a manual engine with one bucket hanging from the same. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson's collection.

THE BRISTOL*

Established 1769. Continued till 1839, when it was transferred to the Imperial.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate VII.—A small and valuable lead (8 ins. vertically \times $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins.). “A ship dimidiated with a castle.”† A good example of this kind of heraldic design is the badge in which the pomegranate of Catherine of Aragon is dimidiated with the red rose (*circa* 1510). Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson’s collection.

THE BRISTOL CROWN

Established in the 18th century.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate VIII.—In proportion to its small size this is a heavy piece of lead. I am presuming that this is the mark of the old Bristol Crown; it certainly was not issued by the Imperial, established as late as 1803, and which, to my knowledge, never issued lead marks. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson’s collection.

THE BRISTOL UNION

Established 1814. Absorbed by the Imperial in 1844.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—“A bundle of sticks neatly tied in the centre,” with “Bristol” above and “Union” below.

* In *The Connoisseur* (May 1902) there is an error in the title of one of the figures. This mark, which has “Bristol” actually upon it, is called there the “British Fire Office,” and the date given “1769-1839,” which is the date of the old Bristol office.

† This is evidently intended for the Bristol coat of arms, which are described in the Visitation Book of 1623. Here the ship is described as coming out of “a large port” of the dexter tower of the castle.

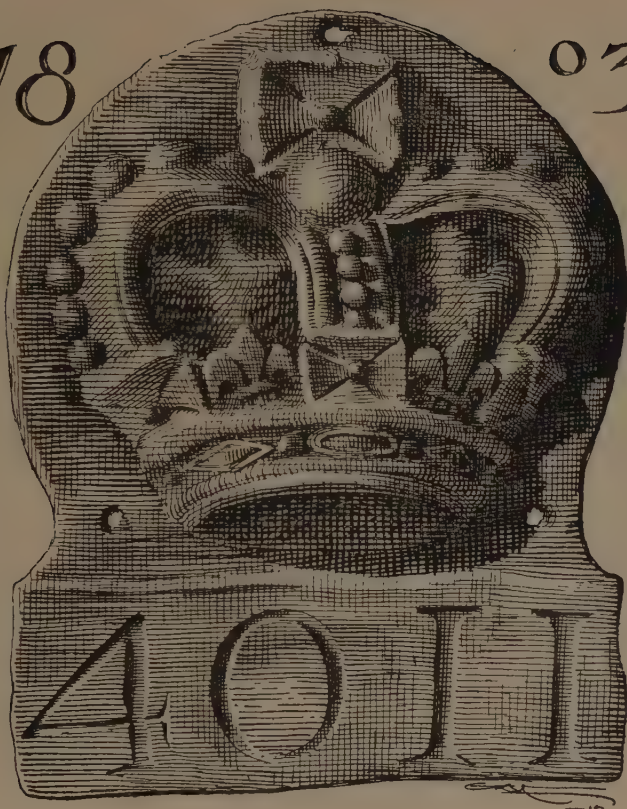
1769

1839



18

03



17

99



18

43

THE BRITANNIA FIRE ASSOCIATION

Established 1868.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—Figure of Britannia.

THE BRITISH FIRE OFFICE

Established 1799. It had an agent in Edinburgh in 1804. Transferred to the Sun in 1843.

Number of variants—5.

Description of Plate IX.—A copper disc (diameter, 8 ins.). A gilded lion and letters; the ground red surrounded by black with a gilt rim. A peculiar “H” is noticed here, not to be seen in the lettering of any other mark or plate outside this office. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Pordage’s collection.

THE BRITISH AND IRISH UNITED

Established 1804. Formed by the Union of the British and the Sun of Dublin.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL

Established 1820.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A ship in full sail, with lion *couchant* below (to the right) and a bale and a half of wool with a barrel; “British” above, “Commercial” below.

THE CALEDONIAN

Established in Edinburgh 1805.

Number of variants—3.

Description of fig. 5 (p. 19):—

The plate from which I made this design was in reality a modern one, one of those used purely as an advertisement. It was I who gave it its antique appearance. Had I only waited a few months I might have given the reader the benefit of a historic plate, which I was allowed (by a tenant!) to take down off a wall myself in Lothian Street. Charles Darwin lodged at No. 11, when a medical student, from 1825 to 1826. I don't suppose the lad ever looked at it, though the plate was undoubtedly there in his time, and another one as well on the same block of buildings, which is still to be seen *in situ*. They are made of tinned iron—the reason why they are very much corroded—and have lost their labels stamped with “Caledonian.” They differ from the later copper ones, inasmuch as the “prickles” of the thistle are entirely absent. I was able to prove this by turning my specimen over; the midribs of the leaves are there, but the smaller veins were left out in the die.

Remarks.—There are a good many “Caledonians” still on the walls in different parts of Old and New Edinburgh. In George Square, once a nest of insurance marks and plates, you will find one,—now the only fire-plate in the whole square—at No. 23, two doors from the house (No. 25) where Sir Walter Scott spent twenty-one years of his early life. Small clean patches on the walls of some of the houses there, between the windows of the first floor (above the ground floor), indicate that “plate-snatchers” have quite recently been at work in this locality.

I might take the opportunity here of stating that I am not a collector. I only possess two plates, that old “Caledonian” to which I have referred (coveted by me because I was myself once a medical student, living within a stone’s throw of Lothian Street) and the modern one issued by the same office. But I have been taken for a collector, or one of his accomplices, while I was in the act of examining and passing my hand all over a certain old fire-mark *in situ*. However, my sketch-book just saved me receiving an unwelcome invitation, and I was no longer looked upon as a suspicious character!

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Established —.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE CITY OF LONDON

Established 1881.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A circular panel with a shield bearing the arms of the city of London:—*argent, a cross gules; in first quarter, a sword in pale point upwards of the last.*

THE COMMERCIAL INSURANCE COMPANY
OF DUBLIN

Established 1799. It was transferred to the Guardian 1827.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate X.—"One a lead mark and the other a cast-iron plate. A full-rigged ship, taken from an already existing design over the door of the Commercial Buildings in the inner yard, Dublin" (W. Coote). Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson's collection.

THE COMMERCIAL UNION

Established 1861. It absorbed the old Hand-in-Hand in 1905.

Number of variants—4.

Description.—The original plate was a circular cast-iron one with "Commercial Union" around a white flag cantoned with the Union Jack. Another plate ($10 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ ins.) shows *a salamander passant vert in flames or and gules.*



Panel for policy number probably here,
judging from the appearance of lead
beneath 8. ix. 10

THE COUNTY

Established 1807. Absorbed by the Alliance 1906.

Number of variants—4.

Description of fig. 4 (p. 17).—An oblong, very thin, copper plate ($8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ ins.). On a red ground a gilded figure of Britannia full face, supporting with her left hand the arms of England; a spear in her right hand; a lion at her foot with his body screened; and "County" in heavy black Roman letters in gilded panel below. In another variant Britannia is looking to her right, and in this one the Union Jack is substituted for the Royal arms; she is here holding a *trident*. According to Mr. C. T. Davis the sizes of the other two of the four variants are $11 \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ ins., and $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. One of these is circular and surrounded by a garter.

THE DISTRICT. (BIRMINGHAM)

Established 1834. Transferred to the Alliance 1864.

Number of variants—4.

Description.—One of tinned iron, the others copper. A circular panel round which is "District" and two firemen's axes crossed; "Fire Office" in panel below. Size $9\frac{1}{2} \times 10$ ins. In the circular panel are the arms of Birmingham:—*quarterly, 1st and 4th, az., a bend of four (should be five) lozenges or; 2nd and 3rd, per pale indented of the last and gules.*

THE DUBLIN

Established 1750.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate XI.—Both of the variants are lead marks, one with policy number affixed, the other with the word “Dublin” alone (W. Coote).

THE DUNDEE

Established 1782. It was so little recognised at first as an institution that the Dundee Register of 1783 takes no notice of the office. In 1809 the Directory has a word to say about it: “The Dundee Fire Assurance engine is in the New Inn Entry, and keys are lodged with Messrs. John Stephen & Sons. . . . The town fire-engine is kept at the foot of School Wynd.” It seems to have succumbed in 1836, as no trace of it has been found in directories after that date. Possibly it was absorbed by its rival, the Forfarshire and Perthshire Fire Insurance Company, founded in 1822.

Number of variants—1.

Description of Plate XII.—A small lead, quaint and pretty, and might have been designed by Robert Adam, but for the perspective of the pot, which is amusingly childish. The arms of the Royal Burgh of Dundee are upon it:—*azure, a pot of growing lilies argent.* The “charge” represents the Virgin Mary “as the lily visited by the quickening dew of heaven in her annunciation while in the vallies of her lowliness;” the silver (we do not know that this mark was blazoned in heraldic colours) symbolising her purity, and the blue her heavenly contemplation. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson’s collection.



PLATE XI

17

82



18

36



THE EAGLE

Established 1807. Discontinued business in 1825 (A. B. Dawson).

Number of variants—1.

Description.—An eagle, with “safety” underneath.

THE ECONOMIC

Established 1874. The fire business transferred to the Commercial Union (1894).

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A plain, tinned iron oblong plate, with “Economic” upon it.

THE EMPRESS

Established 1895.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—Queen Victoria’s head, within a circle surmounted by an imperial crown.

THE ESSEX AND SUFFOLK EQUITABLE

Established 1802.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE ETNA

Established 1866. Founded in Dublin.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A shield with “Etna” upon it.

THE EXCHANGE HOUSE FIRE OFFICE

Established 1706. Originally known as “Povey’s Exchange House Fire Office,” then “the Company of London Insurers,” and ultimately was absorbed by the Sun in 1710.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—

THE FIFE

Established previous to 1809. It had an agent in Edinburgh in that year (Mr. Dawson’s note-book).

Number of variants—1.

Description of Plate XIII.—The specimen, which was lent to me by Mr. A. Pordage, Firemaster of Edinburgh, so that I might sketch it, is, I believe, the only one now in existence. It is a very neat little thing ($5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in diameter, width of panel below, 5 ins.), made of tinned iron, painted black and picked out with gold. Mr. Dawson possesses a coloured cast in lead of the same.

Remarks.—The three laurel wreaths represent the “charges” of the Cupar-Fife coat of arms, which, by the way—up to 1894 at any rate—have never been matriculated.



PLATE XIII

FIRE ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION

Established —.

*Number of variants—1.**Description.—*

FIRE OFFICE ("PHŒNIX" No. 1)

Established 1680-81. The oldest office of which there is any authentic record. In 1705 it was known as the "Phœnix Fire Office," taking the name from its emblem, a phoenix in flames; but it must not be confused with the much later office of that name, not established until 1782. In 1712 it had some 10,000 members, after which time we hear no more about it.

Number of variants—1.

*Description.—*A lead mark with a phoenix in flames upon it.

THE FRIENDLY

Established 1683 or 1686.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—"A sheaf of arrows." At the end of the 17th century the crest of William Hale, Esquire, was used for the fire-mark and firemen's badges (A. B. Dawson). I am not, however, in a position to say whether this is an accurate statement or not.

*Remarks.—*Among this society's regulations was the following:—

"XVII. To prevent any fraud in getting any policy by indirect means after a house is burnt, no house is to be esteemed a secured house till the mark has been actually affixed thereon."

THE FRIENDLY INSURANCE SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

Established 1720. Amalgamated with the Sun in 1847.

Number of variants—7.

I, personally, know of only six variants, unless a difference of weight has been considered, when I could account for the seventh. The same mould appears to have been used for all the “Deo Juvante” marks excepting one variant, in which bracelets are indicated in the casts,* see *Plate XIV*. Mr. Pordage owns a good example, and a very early one too, of the latter, with a policy number “326” (*circa* 1769-70). It was from this my drawing was made. Another mould appears to have done duty for all the smaller marks issued without the motto, while a fourth, with the word “Friendly” in relief upon it, and with no policy number, was cast in iron (*Plate XV*, drawn from a specimen in Mr. H. J. Stevenson’s collection). The policy numbers were marked in three different ways, viz., by piercing, stamping, and engraving, which together with the above accounts for the seven variants.

Description of Plate XVI.—Cast in lead; size 8 ins. square; 9 lbs. 9 oz. in weight—the heaviest of all British fire-marks. It shows a pair of clasped hands with “Deo Juvante” on a scroll above and the policy number on a panel below. The cast, as all no doubt originally were, has been touched up with a chisel; the lettering at any rate suggests this. One writer was in error when he wrote in *Caledonian Jottings* that the mark “is of solid lead.” This would suggest that from beginning to end it was the handiwork

* I am inclined to think that these bracelets were incised deeply after the cast was made, and that it is probable we have here one of remarkably few so issued, possibly the only one of its kind, for not another is known to me.



PLATE XIV





PLATE XVI

of a carver, which it is not. Upon looking at the back of it one finds that it has been cast in a mould, as all fire-marks have been. The clasped hands present here a kind of dumb-bell appearance, and no modelling is visible, owing to the quantity of metal poured into the mould, hence the extra weight. The whole mark was once gilded, excepting the underneath tail portions of the scroll, which, in this particular case, if not in all, were painted red. The casual observer would not detect this, for only here and there is seen a speck of gold leaf—none of your gold *paint* in those days!—still sparkling where the city grime had failed to catch tiny portions of the ancient lead. The figures—to its detriment from an ornamental point of view—have been bodily punched out. I know of no other office that issued marks with pierced figures.

Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Stevenson's collection.

Remarks.—It is quite evident that the first fire-marks which were fixed on Edinburgh houses were issued by a London office, and not, as Mr. Percy Collins has inferred, by the Scottish "Friendly."*

We gather from Robert Chambers's *Notices of the most Remarkable Fires in Edinburgh from 1385 to 1824* (compiled in 1824) that "the Sun Fire Office of London transmitted five guineas to their agent in Edinburgh, to be distributed amongst the firemen and such other individuals as had exerted themselves most upon the calamitous occasion" of a dreadful fire which broke out in a *land* opposite to the foot of Martin's Wynd (where the South Bridge now stands). And we are also told, in a footnote, that "an agent deputed from this office in 1733 was the first appearance of an insurance office in Edinburgh."

As all fire offices in those days had engines of their

* In *The Connoisseur* (May 1902) Mr. Collins, beneath the small photo of his *Deo Juvante* (No. 43 policy), has fixed the date of it "*circa* 1726."

own, we may take it for granted that the *Sun* was the first company to run an engine in Edinburgh,* and the first to issue fire-plates as a necessary consequence. Had it not been for the courtesy of a clerk at the Caledonian Office in George Street, I should have been still in doubt upon this subject, but in *Caledonian Jottings* (No. 26, April 1, 1898, edited by Mr. R. J. Niven) there appeared an instructive and most entertaining paper entitled "Fire-Marks and Fire-Plates," by Mr. Davis, Librarian of the Wandsworth Library. A copy of this magazine was given to me, and from it I have extracted these notes, which prove that the Scottish *Friendly* did not issue fire-marks until many years after the *Sun* issued theirs:—

"In Lady Stair's Close, leading from the Lawnmarket to the Mound (originally to the Nor' Loch), stood a mansion known by the name of Lady Stair's House, an excellent example of a Scotch noble's town residence of nearly three hundred years ago. . . . This mansion which, after various vicissitudes, had latterly been used as a tenemental house of a somewhat insanitary character, was acquired by Lord Rosebery, and is now being restored from the designs and under the superintendence of his architect, Mr. G. S. Aitken. Through the courtesy of this gentleman we have seen a leaden fire-mark which was found affixed to the wall near the top of one of the tall east windows on the east side of the house.

"This mark is that of the *Friendly Insurance Society of Edinburgh*, established in 1720, the first Scotch fire insurance office, and the number appears to show that the property was covered by the tenth policy which had been issued.

"According to Mr. Relton, the first name of the company was 'The Friendly Society of the Heritors of Edinburgh and Suburbs thereof, in Canongate, Leith, etc., for a Mutual Insurance of their Tenements and Houses from Losses by Fire.' Shortly afterwards the title was 'Friendly Contributors or Co-Partners.' In 1728 it was altered to 'The Edinburgh Friendly Insurance against Losses by Fire.'

* In the above little volume by Robert Chambers we are told that there were several fire-engines in Edinburgh in the year 1758. From other notices of "remarkable fires" we infer that the city had its own engine, and that there was also one at the Castle, which the soldiers were allowed to use for civil purposes as well as for their own requirements. The *Friendly* may or may not have owned an engine previous to 1767.

"It was a mutual office. The deed of settlement, or articles of agreement, is printed at length in Maitland's *History of Edinburgh*, 1753, pp. 331-335. I find on reference to Mr. Relton's book that for the first forty years the *Friendly* consisted solely of members in Edinburgh and vicinity, who insured their buildings *only*, under 'bonds' of the society, which were virtually the policies. It was not till 1767 that household furniture and stock were insured as well as buildings, and the business extended over Scotland. Policy No. 1 was not issued till 15th May 1767, and Policy No. 28 on 17th June 1767, so that Lady Stair's House may have been insured originally either in May or June 1767."

Here the editor, Mr. Niven, adds a footnote in which he says, "This raises the question whether the fire-marks of the *Friendly* began to be issued with the 'bonds' of 1720, or with the policies of 1767. Can any of our readers help to solve the puzzle?"

Mr. Davis, I am inclined to think, has himself unconsciously answered this question, for we know that No. 10 policy, together with a No. 10 fire-mark, was issued in 1767, and we also know (twelve years after he had written his paper) that no *Friendly* fire-mark earlier than Lord Rosebery's *Deo Juvante* (No. 10) has come to light after much research, *i.e.*, not one earlier than the above—which we naturally presume was one of the first of the *Friendly* issued—has been found anywhere in Edinburgh or Leith.

Upon examining a number of marks in the possession of Mr. A. B. Dawson of 33 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh, I was able to put two and two together, and so make certain that no marks bearing clasped hands, with or without the motto "*Deo Juvante*," were issued by the *Friendly* previous to 1767, unless the society started again at No. 1 in that year, which is highly improbable, for we have never heard of a single society or office in any country acting in such a way during the course of its existence.

Granted then that no marks known to us of the *Friendly* belong to a set of policies issued previous to 1767, we may still be a little puzzled to find the policy numbers 745 and

2854 stamped upon the *smaller* of the two marks, viz., the one without “Deo Juvante” in relief upon it, and Nos. 1158, 1818, 1857, 2398, 2927 and 2953* upon the larger or *Deo Juvante* variant, which looks as if the large and the small marks were running together, for, as I have inferred above, the No. 10 policy was pierced through a *Deo Juvante*, and Nos. 17, 240 and 643 also appear on specimens of that variant.

There is no question then that the office was issuing indiscriminately large and small marks at the same time for some years of its life in the Scotch metropolis, and what is more, the larger ones had their policy numbers punched out, stamped, or engraved upon them; the earliest of all appear to have been punched out. The number of the only engraved one which I have come across, No. 2398—and a very light one too, weighing only $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.—is in Mr. Dawson’s collection. The weight of the *Deo Juvante* variants, with the exception of this one, is, comparatively speaking, very great, amounting in some cases to 9 lbs. 9 oz.

Even if we did not know for certain that policy No. 10 of this society was issued with a mark in 1767, we could next door to prove that old Scottish fire-marks, known as those of the *Friendly*, were issued not earlier than about that date, owing to the fact that Mr. Dawson’s No. 745 was found on a wall of a house in St. James Square, in the New Town of Edinburgh, which square was completed in 1779 and was not started before 1775.

We are told by Mr. Davis that policy No. 28 was issued with its mark on the 17th June 1767, which implies that twenty-eight policies were issued in thirty-three days, No. 1 having been issued on the 15th of the preceding month, and from 1767 until the amalgamation of the *Friendly* with

* The first of these, Mr. H. J. Stevenson’s; the second, Mr. A. Pordage’s; all the others, Mr. A. B. Dawson’s.

the *Sun* in 1847, something like 28,312 policies were sent out from the Edinburgh office, an average all through of about 354 per annum.

I trust then that I have cleared up, once and for all, this very vexed question concerning the date of issue of the first Scottish fire-mark.

I append here a list of fourteen early Scottish Friendly fire-marks, eleven of which (marked with *) are owned by Mr. A. B. Dawson. It was I myself who conceived the notion of such a list; it should serve as a guide to the proximate date of issue of other collectors' specimens:—

NO. OF POLICY.	CHARACTER OF FIGURES.	DESIGN.
10 (Issued May 1767.)	Pierced.	Large mark with "Deo Juvante."
17*	Do.	Do.
240*	Do.	Do.
643* (Weight, 9 lbs.)	Do.	Do.
745* (From St. James's Square, Edinburgh, built 1779.)	Stamped.	Small mark without "Deo Juvante."
910	Do.	Do.
1857*	Pierced.	Large mark with "Deo Juvante."
2398*	Engraved.	Do.
2854*	Stamped.	Small mark without "Deo Juvante."
2927*	Do.	Large mark with "Deo Juvante."
2953*	Do.	Do.
3999* (From Brickfield Close, Leith.)	Do.	Small mark without "Deo Juvante."
8343 (Size, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$ ins.)	Do.	Do.
10608*	Do.	Do.

THE GENERAL

Established 1720.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY OF IRELAND (THE DUBLIN "PHŒNIX")

Established 1779. It became in 1802 the "General" or "Phœnix" Insurance Company, and in 1805 became known only as the "Phœnix Insurance Company." It appears to have ceased in 1824.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—Both lead marks, one with policy number ($8\frac{3}{4} \times 7$ ins.) and the other with nothing attached. A Phœnix in flames on a straight wreath in the form of a crest. Mr. A. B. Dawson owns a very fine specimen (with policy number 2975), which he obtained from Mr. William Coote, of Dublin.

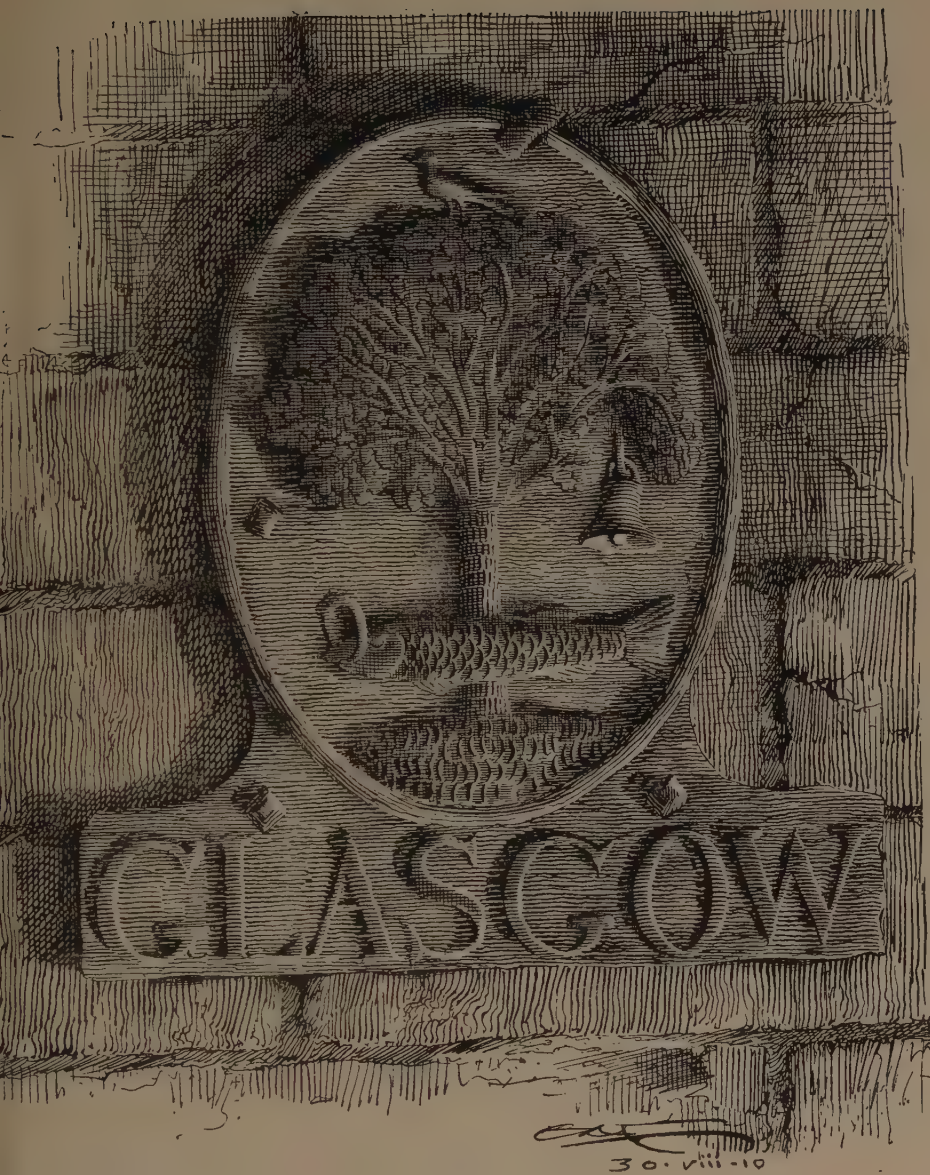
THE GLASGOW

Established 1836. I would have thought much earlier, judging from the appearance of the quaint lead.

Number of variants—1.

Description of Plate.—Made of lead, size, $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. vertically; width of panel below (with "Glasgow" upon it), $8\frac{1}{8}$ ins.

The Glasgow arms figure here. They are thus recorded in the Lyon Office (October 25, 1866):—*Argent, on a mount in base vert an oak tree proper, the stem at the base thereof surmounted by a salmon on his back, also proper, with a signet ring in his mouth, or; on the top of the tree a red-breast, and in the sinister fess point an ancient hand-bell, both also proper.*





An appropriate quatrain has been sung about this eccentric coat, viz. :—

“The Bird that never flew,
The Fish that never swam,
The Tree that never grew,
And the Bell that never rang.”

The Arms of Royal and Parliamentary Burghs, by John, Marquess of Bute, K.T., and two others, will explain to the reader the meaning of it all—traditions of course relating to St. Kentigern, founder of the city. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson's collection.

Remarks.—It will be noted in my drawing that the salmon is *not* “on his back.” At the time the fire-mark was issued this detail had, perhaps, not entered into the heads of heraldic draftsmen! nor, evidently, had they studied the bell, for we do not see here one of the curious quadrangular type common to those which figure among Celtic ecclesiastical antiquities. The bird, too, is in no way like a “red-breast!”

THE GLOBE

Established 1803. Amalgamated with the Liverpool and London in 1864.

Number of variants—3.

Description of Plate XVIII.—The earlier ones have policy number gilded upon them.

THE GREAT BRITAIN

Established 1871. Transferred to the National of Ireland.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE GUARDIAN

Established 1821.

Number of variants—4.

*Description of fig. 3 (p. 13).—*Size, $9\frac{1}{4}$ ins. vertically. Drawn from a specimen lent to me by Mr. David Lyon, of the Mound, Edinburgh.

THE HAND-IN-HAND

Established 1696. First named the "Amicable Contributors for Insuring from Loss by Fire," but shortly became known by the title of the Hand-in-Hand on account of its emblem, the clasped hands. It held its bicentenary on November 12, 1896. In 1905 this ancient office was absorbed by the Commercial Union, which adopted its emblem with the crown.

Number of variants—6.

*Description of Frontispiece and Plate.—*The mark shown in the Frontispiece has been repainted black and gold, but it is a genuine lead. It measures 8 ins. at the widest part, and $8\frac{3}{4}$ ins. vertically, and appears to have been cast from the same die as Nos. 70402 and 99060, which Mr. Collins had photographed for *The Connoisseur* (May 1902) amongst his set of six variants. That figuring in Plate XIX. is the older of the two, with the crown fenestrated, thereby making the design a more imposing one. Its width is $7\frac{1}{8}$ ins., height $8\frac{1}{4}$ ins. from tip of *cross pattée* to base of panel. Excepting for the black panel it is gilded all over. It, too, is a genuine lead. I have seen modern casts in lead, bronzed over, of both of these.

*Remarks.—*There seems to linger still a feeling of doubt in some heads concerning the straightforwardness, or the reverse, of one company after another adopting the hand-





A FIREMAN'S BADGE.

in-hand as an emblem, or part of its device. I presume that the Patent Act could, if it chose, prevent the use of the clasped hands with the crown for any company which should be mean and foolish enough to adopt such an emblem; but no law at present could drop on to a company for using the clasped hands alone, or for incorporating them with some other design. I have discussed this question under the head of the Norwich Union.

Both of these marks I sketched from specimens in Mr. Pordage's collection.

THE HANTS, SUSSEX, AND DORSET

Established 1803. Absorbed by the Alliance in 1864.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A very small and exceedingly heavy copper disc, with "Hants, Sussex, and Dorset" around it and "Security" on label below. In the centre is the goddess of Fire, surrounded by clouds and seated on a throne, and holding a spear in her right and shield in her left hand, with a child crouching at her feet.

THE HERTFORDSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, AND COUNTY

Established 1824. Fire business transferred to the Phoenix in 1831.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE HOPE

Established 1807. Discontinued the fire business in 1826.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—On an oval plate, $9 \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ ins., a foul anchor canted; beneath it on a label the word “HOPE.”

THE HIBERNIAN

Established 1771. Transferred to the Sun in 1839 (W. Coote).

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate XXI.—Both are of lead, one with policy number, the other with “Hibernian” alone. Its marks are numerous. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson’s collection.

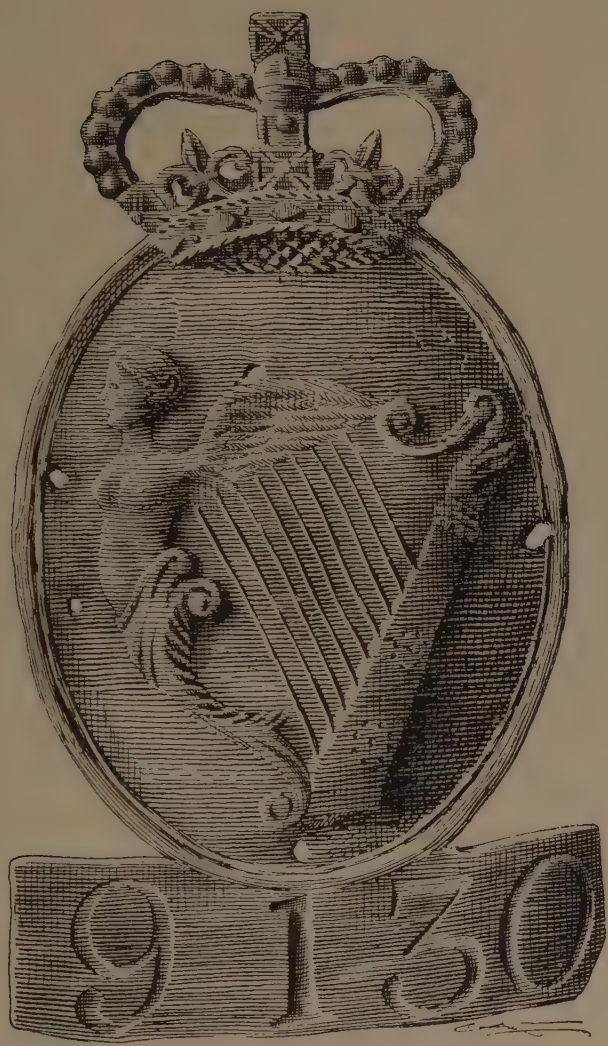
THE IMPERIAL

Established 1803. It took over the Bristol in 1839, and the Bristol Union in 1844, and was itself absorbed by the Alliance in 1902.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—The following was inscribed by Mr. C. T. Davis in Mr. Dawson’s note-book:—

- “1. An Imperial Crown with name ‘Imperial’ below, all on a bell-shaped copper plate.
- “2. As No. 1, but lettering different.
- “3. As No. 1, but crown smaller, and beneath it ‘1803’ over ‘Imperial’ (size, $8 \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ins.).”





THE INSURANCE COMPANY OF SCOTLAND

Established 1821. Incorporated with the Alliance in 1847.

Number of variants—1.

Description of fig. 1 (p. 1).—The Scottish Regalia on a copper plate. Drawn from a specimen lent to me by Mr. David Lyon.

THE KENT

Established 1802.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate XXII.—The colouring of this copper plate is most tasteful. The white horse is shown up well on an old rose ground, with a shapely black Roman letter above and below on gilded panels. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson's collection.

THE LANCASHIRE

Established 1852.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—One of the plates shows “a small crown beneath ‘Lancashire’ on a curve; beneath, gules three lions passant guardant in pale or, a label on the first lion argent.” So writes Mr. C. T. Davis in Mr. Dawson's note-book.

THE LEEDS

Established —.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A lead mark issued by this office, was found on an old house in Doncaster by Mr. G. W. Bain in 1896. It bears “the usual Borough of Leeds emblems.”

THE LEEDS AND YORKSHIRE

Established 1824. It was taken over by the “Liverpool, London, and Globe” in 1864.

*Number of variants—1.**Description.*—

THE LEICESTER

Established 1834.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A small circular plate with the name “Leicester” and an open wild rose bloom upon it.

THE LICENSED VICTUALLERS

Established 1836. Became the Monarch (No. 2), which was transferred to the Liverpool and London in 1857.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A bunch of grapes, backed by leaves, surrounded by a garter with “Licensed Victuallers” upon it. Size of plate, $11\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ ins.



THE LION

Established —.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—A lion couchant with “Lion” below. Size of plate, 9×7 ins.

THE LIVERPOOL AND LONDON

Established 1846.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate XXIII.—A copper plate ($8 \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ ins.). The bird is *not* the “liver” (?) bird, as one collector told me he was meant for; he represents the crest of Liverpool—a cormorant, the wings elevated, in the beak a branch of laver (a kind of seaweed) proper. The other object is the crest of London—a dragon’s sinister wing argent, charged with a cross gules.

Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson’s collection.

Remarks.—The cross on the dragon’s wing has been omitted by the die-cutter. Dragon’s blood, green and gold, are the colours used for this plate, and not the heraldic ones. One writer refers to a “Liverpool” established in 1777, and says it was transferred to the Phoenix in 1795, but I have never seen its plate, nor do I know who was the author of that statement.

THE LIVERPOOL AND LONDON AND GLOBE

Established 1864.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—Somewhat similar to the Liverpool and London, only a globe added to the plate.

THE LONDON AND LANCASHIRE

Established 1862.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—The arms and crest of London and Lancaster on two escutcheons, and the title of the company.

THE LONDON AND PROVINCIAL

Established 1881. Absorbed by the Old London Assurance.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—The Union Jack and another flag showing the arms of the City of London.

THE LONDON ASSURANCE

Established 1720. "This old corporaion was chartered for marine business in 1720 by a special Act of Parliament, in conjunction with the Royal Exchange Assurance Company. In 1721 a charter was granted to the '*Corporation of the London Assurance of Houses and Goods from Fire.*' The two corporations, marine and fire, which had operated practically as one, were consolidated and called the London Assurance Corporation." (From Mr. A. B. Dawson's note-book.)

Number of variants—4.

Description of Plate XXIV.—The oldest leaden specimen I have seen shows Britannia holding a spear in her left hand and supporting a harp with her right. On her left side an escutcheon with the arms of London thereon. This specimen was lent to me by Mrs. C. H. Woolford. It was somewhat distorted, and the figure's left arm badly twisted. It measures $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. vertically by $6\frac{3}{8}$ ins., the panel below half an inch wider. I would put the date of issue at about 1785.

Later issues show (1) Britannia on a circular leaden disc with policy number on a panel below; (2) the same in copper, without policy number, and "London" instead on the panel.

J720





THE MANCHESTER BANK AND INSURANCE
OFFICE

Established 1771.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—I have never seen its fire-mark; it is a very rare one indeed. I gather from Mr. Dawson's note-book that Mr. G. W. Bain added one to his fine collection in 1896.

THE MANCHESTER FIRE AND LIFE
ASSURANCE COMPANY

Established 1824.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate XXV.—A copper plate with the arms of Manchester upon it.

Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson's collection.

THE MIDDLESEX

Established 1874.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE NATIONAL ASSURANCE COMPANY OF IRELAND

Established 1822.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A plate only; its die still in existence (W. Coote).

THE NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE

Established 1783. In 1859 it was taken over by the North British (which became the North British and Mercantile in 1862).

Number of variants—3.

Description of Plate XXVI.—A perfectly flat lead mark ($7\frac{5}{8}$ ins. vertically; diameter of oval, crossways, $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins.). It is exceedingly heavy for its size. Originally it was gilded all over, but is now as black as the Castle of Newcastle itself, which I once also had the pleasure of including in my *Sketch-Book* (Pt. II.). Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson's collection.

Description of Plate XXVII.—A copper plate ($8\frac{7}{8}$ ins. vertically; width of panel below, $7\frac{7}{8}$ ins.). The castle and the name "Newcastle" had once been gilded, the rest painted black. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson's collection.

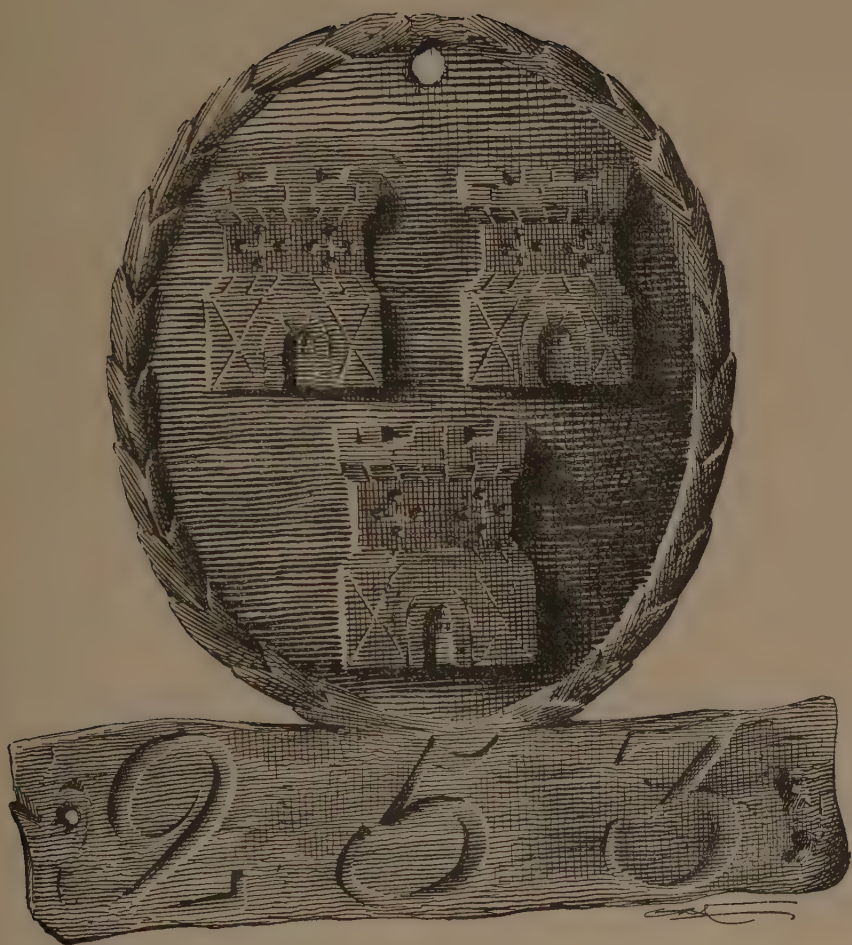


PLATE XXVI





THE NORTH BRITISH

Established 17th April 1809. The first meeting was held in the Royal Exchange Coffee House, on ground where Queen Mary, it is said, spent her last night in Edinburgh. It obtained a Royal Charter in 1824, which was signed by King George IV. and Sir Robert Peel, Home Secretary. Took over the older Newcastle Fire Office in 1859, and in 1862 the Mercantile, when it became the North British and Mercantile.

Number of variants—2.

Description of Plate XXVIII.—A tinned-iron plate ($7\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in height, and width of panel below, $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins.), showing St. Andrew supporting a cross. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. H. J. Stevenson's collection.

Remarks.—Some of these plates were gilded *all* over, others painted gold and black. The variant not illustrated by me shows the saint with his left knee bent and foot turned out, and his hands lower down on the cross. Many of the earlier issue of this plate are still to be seen *in situ* on Edinburgh houses.

THE NORTH BRITISH AND MERCANTILE

Established 1809.

Number of variants—6.

I presume these variants include the two issued by the old North British.

Description.—St. George and the Dragon appear on one of the variants, and the arms of England and Scotland on another; the arms of London and Edinburgh on a third; and a fourth has been issued for foreign use.

THE NORTHERN

Established 1836.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—The arms of Scotland with a closed crown above is seen on one of the variants.

THE NORWICH GENERAL ASSURANCE
OFFICE

Established 1792. Absorbed the Anchor (No. 1) in 1811, and merged into the Norwich Union, 1821.

Number of variants—3.

Description of Plate XXIX.—(See under head of Norwich Union, p. 130).

THE NORWICH EQUITABLE

Established 1829. Wound up in Chancery in 1883-5 (A. B. Dawson).

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

1792



THE NORWICH UNION

Established 1797. Absorbed the Norwich General Assurance Office, 1821.

Number of variants—10.

Description of Plates XXIX. and XXX. and Remarks combined.—Perhaps no fire office, excepting the mighty Sun and the Alliance, each of which in its time has absorbed not a few old offices, is so rich in fire-marks, fire-plates, and “policy pictures” as the Norwich Union. Fourteen of the two former have already been discovered, and all save three or four are decided variants; in fact, they include no less than eight perfectly distinct designs.

The last ten years has done much to enlighten us upon their history. When Griswold wrote his papers for *The Chronicle* of 1891 and 1893, he evidently knew very little about the early marks and plates of this office and the offices which it absorbed; he describes also the “charge” in the Norwich General as a “lion couchant.” He meant to say, of course, “lion passant regardant”—a very different thing in heraldry—and a splendid beast he is, too, in this particular design.

I have made my drawing (*Plate XXIX.*) from an early copper plate, or rather we might give it the honour of the term “mark,” for it shows the policy number, and was issued somewhere between the years 1800 and 1821, when it would be doing duty as a proper fire-mark.

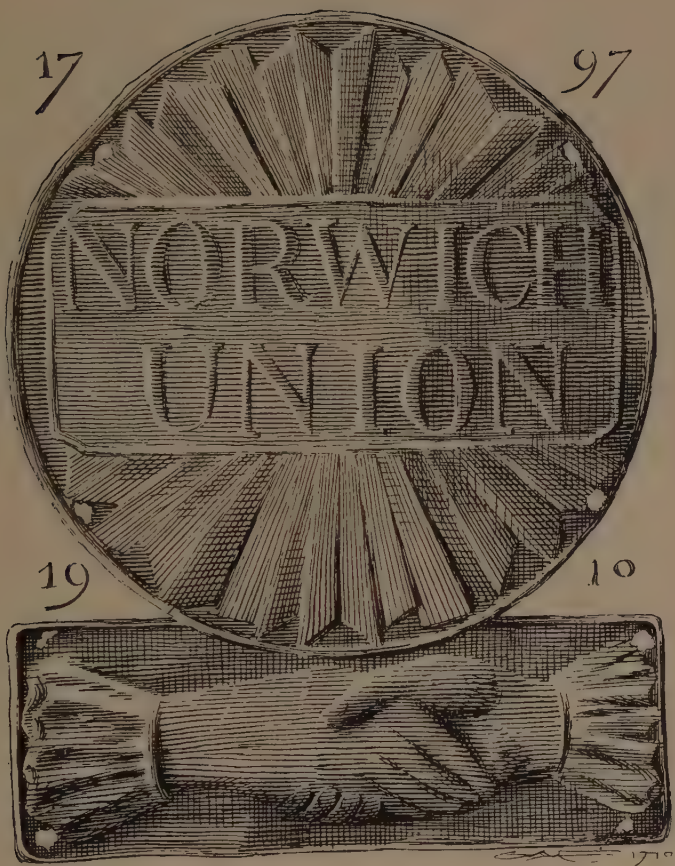
Beyond mentioning the mark displaying the castle and lion, and referring to the figure of Justice, etc., in the society’s badge, that American author tells us nothing more about the very interesting series of wall-plates issued by this old office and the two which it absorbed at the beginning of last century.

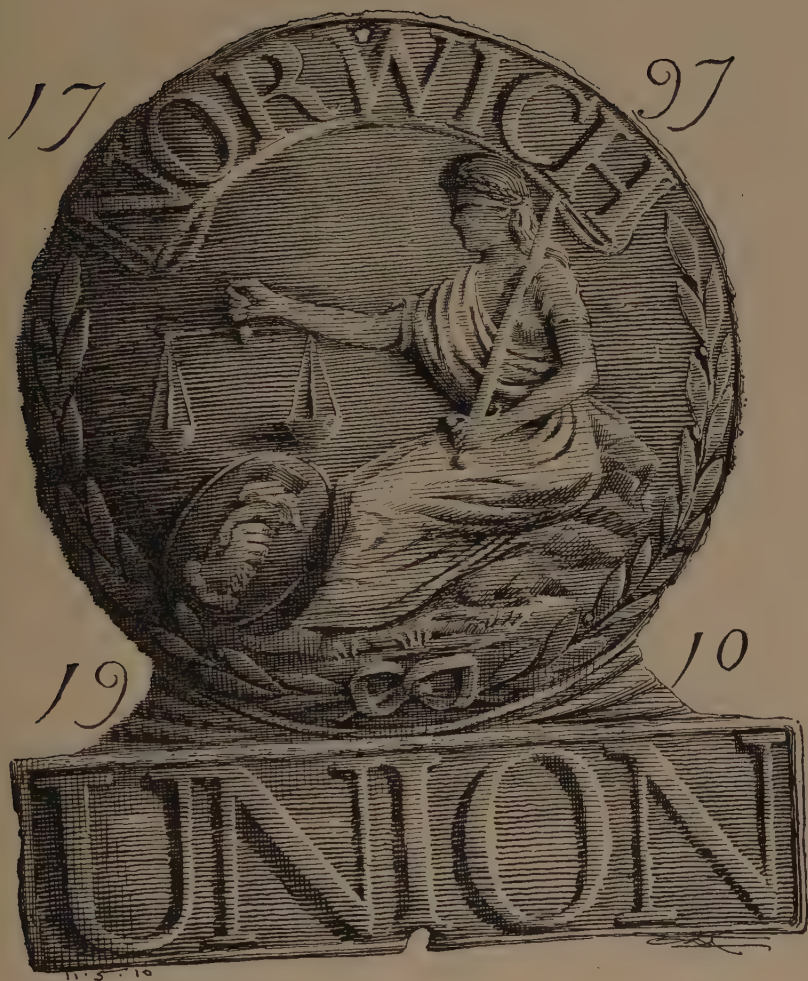
It was left to Mr. Ernest Felce, F.R.H.S., so late as November 1906, to write up for the *Norwich Union Magazine* an intelligent account of the history of its marks and plates. It is his paper, therefore, which is my authority for some of the following statements.

In 1792 the Norwich General Assurance Office was established and continued to run by itself until 1821, when it was swallowed up by the Norwich Union. During those twenty-nine years it issued two different lead marks and one copper plate. All three show the castle and lion. Lead mark No. 1 has the policy number stamped beneath "Norwich," and the copper plate, as I have stated above, also shows the policy number, which is not stamped but gilded upon the panel. In the specimen of the latter belonging to Mr. Dawson which I have sketched for this book, one can easily see that gold leaf had been applied to the size beneath, which I have indicated in my drawing. I take it that most, if not all, of the earlier marks and plates were so gilded, the more modern and much inferior gold paint not having come into fashion.

The Anchor Fire Office was absorbed by this Norwich Company. It came into being in 1808, and merged into the latter in 1811. The Anchor had issued one mark with a policy number gilded upon its panel below an anchor.

In 1797 the Norwich Union was founded, and between that year and 1821—the year of the amalgamation with the Norwich General—it issued a lead mark and two copper ones, each with clasped hands in relief upon it. After that date came a series of seven copper, iron, and tinned-iron plates. The two earliest of these show conventional rays of the sun behind "Norwich" in the one and "Norwich Union" in the other (*Plate XXX.*), and clasped hands beneath all; the last five have the figure of Justice blindfolded upon them, but each shows a different design. One of the





iron plates gives us a view of the figure of Justice seated to the right, whereas in each of the other cases she is seated to the left.

Mr. Felce writes, "It would not be well to suggest, even now, that all the Norwich marks have been identified and described. The future may yet have some surprises in store, especially as seven of the specimens here pictured"—fourteen excessively small photos appeared in the magazine—"have only come to light within the last two or three years."

I might make this additional remark that the clasped hands in all the Norwich Union designs are different from those of the *earliest* form of clasped hands as used by the Hand-in-Hand Fire Office; they are clasped the reverse way. The reader should compare my drawing of the hands in the fireman's badge (*Plate XX.*) with those of the Norwich Union's fire-plate (*Plate XXXI.*). Nevertheless he will find they are similar, in the way they are clasped, to those in all the *marks* of the Hand-in-Hand. There is no doubt that—convention or no convention—the Norwich Union copied the idea from the very much older company, though the former's clasped hands, after 1821, are but subordinate to its figure of Justice, the most striking feature of its fire-plates; but this is by no means the case with its "policy pictures." Here the hands were for many years made the leading feature of the design; in one they were wreathed in laurels and put on a pedestal with *Justice* herself at their side! I gather that about 1820 this design was abandoned for the simpler device of the Norwich arms, surmounted by a mayoral cap of maintenance. But Mr. Felce stated that up to November 1906 (the date of his paper) a somewhat similar design to the above, with the clasped hands and Justice, still survived on the official receipts. Those, however, who are not aware of the fact may be interested to know that the *clasped hands*, as an emblem of good faith

or friendship, are a hundred years older at least than the pair joined together in the old Hand-in-Hand badge (1696). Let the reader take the first opportunity of consulting *A New Artistic Alphabet*, designed by Theodore de Bry, which was first published in 1595. Here in the elaborate picture of the letter "F" (standing for Faith) we see the prototype of the clasped hands of the Hand-in-Hand fire-mark. We must, therefore, look upon *clasped hands* as a convention which any business firm might be entitled to if it chose to adopt the emblem.

THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND DERBYSHIRE

Established 1835. Transferred to the Imperial in 1869.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A tinned-iron circular disc surrounded by a garter on which is "Notts and Derbys." In the centre, on a granulated ground a shield bearing a coat of arms upon which are three crowns, etc.

THE PALATINE

Established —.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—

THE PALLADIUM

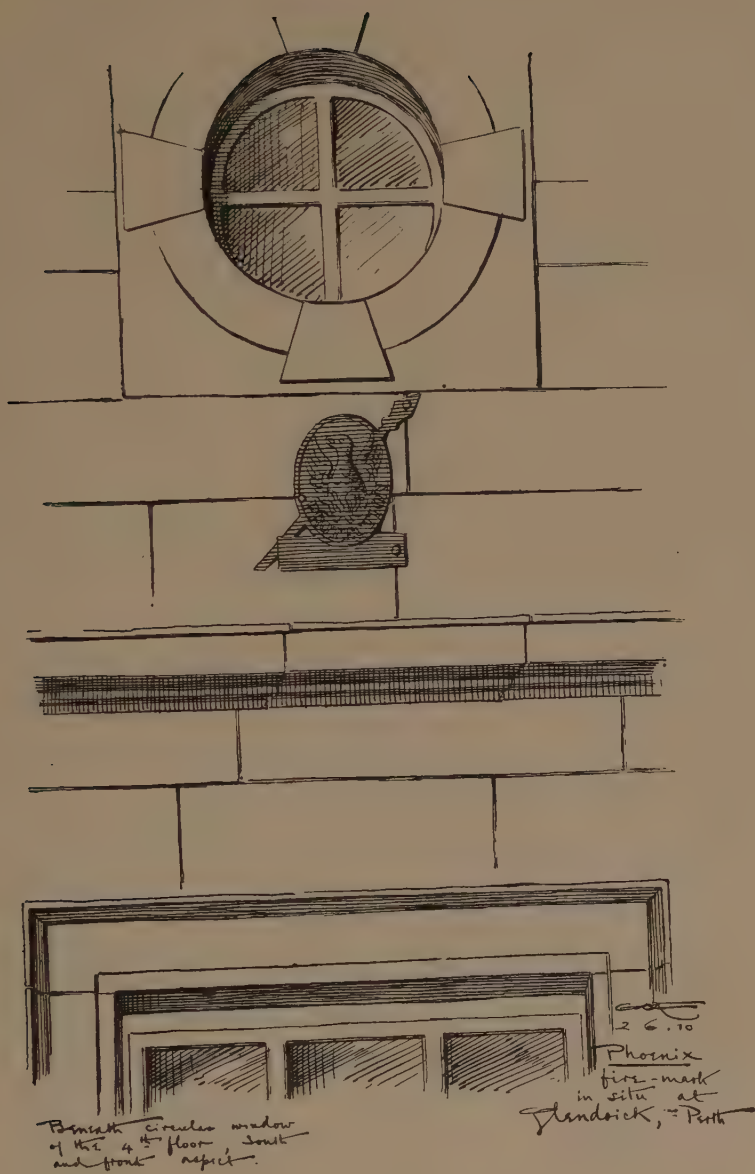
Established 1797. Mr. Dawson in his note-book gives two offices of this name, one established in 1797 and the other in 1824.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—







THE PATRIOTIC

Established in 1824 in Ireland.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—One lead mark and two copper plates.

THE PHOENIX

Established 1782. Took over the Protector Fire in 1835, as well as the Herts, Cambridge, and County (fire business), and the Berkshire and Gloucester (fire business) in 1831.

Number of variants—7.

Description of Plates.—It will be noticed that the head of the spear has been knocked off the disc in my drawing *Plate XXXII.*, but it is intact in the specimen shown in *Plate XXXIII.* The former, made of copper, comes out of Mr. H. J. Stevenson's collection; the latter was sketched in detail by me from a copper specimen on the front of Glendoick, Glencarse, Perthshire, the residence of Mr. Alfred W. Cox. The size of this one from tip of spear to base of panel below is $11\frac{1}{4}$ ins.; diameter of oval disc vertically, $7\frac{3}{8}$ ins. The policy number was *painted* on the panel with black, the letters of "Protection" also black; the rest had been gilded except for a blackened rim. I have included a sketch which I made at Glendoick so as to show the old fire-plate together with its surroundings (*Plate XXXIV.*).

THE PROTECTOR

Established in London 1825. Took over the Beacon in 1827, and was transferred to the Phoenix in 1835.

Number of variants—1.

Description of Plate XXXV.—A copper plate showing a fireman, with a box-hat on his head, playing on the flames issuing from a house to his left; a bridge behind him, and on a label below, "Protector." Drawn from a specimen in Mr. H. J. Stevenson's collection.

THE QUEEN

Established 1857. Absorbed by the Royal in 1891.

Number of variants—4.

Description of Plate XXXVI.—In my drawing of this copper plate, showing the head of Victoria (as we knew our great and good Queen on the old red penny stamps), the outer rim must be imagined carried upwards to form an obtuse angle, and in the angle would be a shamrock without a stalk. The correct colouring of this plate was black and gold; the head, inner rim, and lettering gilded, the rest black. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. H. J. Stevenson's collection.

In *Plate XXXVII.* I have merely sketched the head of Queen Victoria from an older copper plate, which in its complete form measures $8\frac{3}{4}$ ins. vertically.



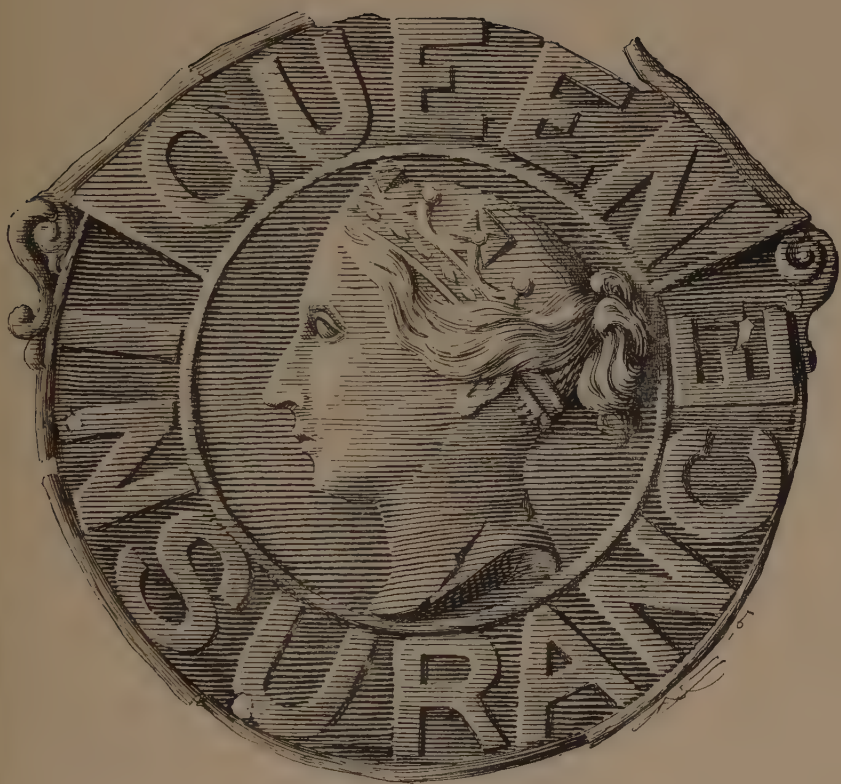
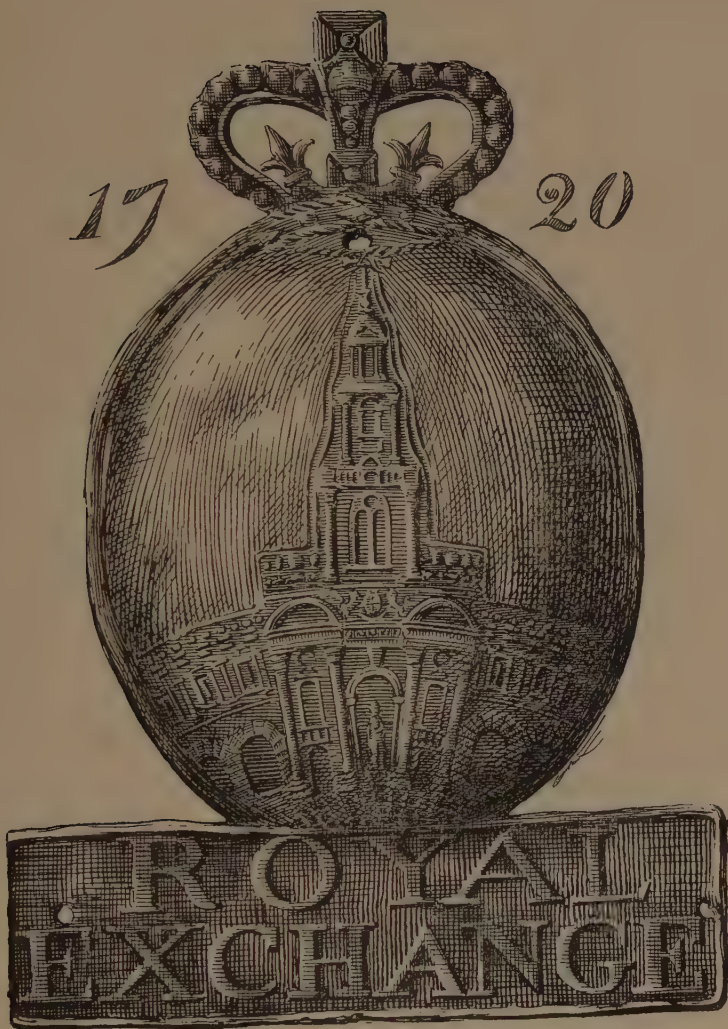


PLATE XXXVI



"QUEEN"



THE ROYAL

Established 1845.

Number of variants—3.

Description.—One variant shows the crest of Liverpool, a cormorant with liver (seaweed) in its beak, a crown and the title "Royal."

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE

Established 1720. ("Post Magazine," 1909.)

Number of variants—7.

Description of Plate XXXVIII.—A lead mark. The second Royal Exchange, built by Edward Jarman after the great fire of 1666, is here represented as it appeared before it was itself burnt down in 1838. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Pordage's collection.

Remarks.—The seven variants of this old mark make a very pretty ornament for a wall. The badge worn by the firemen also shows this building.

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE OF IRELAND

Established 1784. (W. Coote.) Discontinued 1821.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A lead mark. It shows the Dublin City Hall, which in those days was the Royal Exchange.

Remarks.—Mr. Coote has written (1904) that he possessed the only specimen known.

THE ROYAL FARMERS

Established 1840. Transferred to the Alliance in 1888.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—A sheaf of corn.

THE ROYAL IRISH

Established 1824. (W. Coote.)

Number of variants—2.

Description.—One lead mark and one copper plate, showing the Royal arms.

ST. PATRICK'S

Established 1824, in Ireland.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—St. Patrick appearing upon it.

THE SALAMANDER

Established 1802. Transferred to the Imperial in 1803. (A. B. Dawson.)

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A salamander amidst flames. A salamander is a reptile allied to the frog, and was once supposed to have been able to live in the flames.



THE SALOP

Established 1780. Absorbed by the Alliance in 1890.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—The arms of the town of Shrewsbury.

THE SCOTTISH IMPERIAL

Established 1866.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—The Scottish lion rampant is seen on an almost square plate.

THE SCOTTISH UNION

Established 1824. United with Scottish National in 1878, now known as the Scottish Union and National.

Number of variants—3.

THE SCOTTISH UNION AND NATIONAL

Established —. (See Scottish Union.)

Number of variants—1.

Description.—

THE SHAMROCK

Established 1825.

Number of variants—1.

Description of Plate XL.—A lead mark of a very ornamental character. It will be observed that an Irishman ("S. Hanna") had been at work scratching his name and the date (1831) within a flag upon this specimen, which was secured by Mr. W. Coote for Mr. Dawson. Initials of other members of the same family may be seen here. We may take it for granted that those Hannas are now as dead as the company which issued the mark.

THE SHROPSHIRE AND NORTH WALES

Established 1837. Absorbed by the Alliance in 1890.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—The Prince of Wales' feathers and title of the office upon it.

18

25







PLATE XLII

THE STANDARD

Established 1874.

*Number of variants—1.**Description.—*

THE STAR

Established 1845.

Number of variants—2.

Description.—A circular copper plate with a star of eight points, upon which is a garter and cross with “Fire Insurance Company.”

THE SUN

Established 1710. This office has absorbed a number of old companies, but none older than itself. It is the oldest fire office in the world trading under its own name. Another office has absorbed a still older company, but is not known by the latter's title, though it has adopted its device. The Sun last year celebrated its duo-centenary.

Number of variants—13.

Description of Initial Letter of Preface and Plates XLI. and XLII.—In the initial letter of preface is seen a lead mark with policy number 537634. Its size is $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. wide below and 7 ins. vertically. The face of the sun and rays are cast in high relief, and here and there a carver's touches are visible. The figures are stamped. For its size it is very heavy. It was taken off an old Edinburgh house. Drawn from a specimen lent me by Mr. Butti. *Plates XLI. and*

XLIII. show what I take to be mere badges, the one with 20 rays all wavy and made of copper, the groundwork sky-blue and the sun and rays gilded; and the other showing only 16 rays, straight and wavy alternating, made of tinned iron. The latter is much the older of the two, and has a more Gothic appearance.

Remarks.—The 13 variants of the Sun marks and plates depend upon small differences of *one* design and the metal with which they are made. The profile of the sun's face must be examined carefully. The earlier the mark the smaller, flatter and rounder is the face, which shows that new moulds were made from time to time. The diagram which I have drawn indicates three types of the face in lead marks from policy number 298512 (the central figure) to number 729694 (on the left). The number of the right hand one is 661080.



We know that number 7319 was issued in the year 1719, but the collector would have to enquire from the head office of the Sun concerning the dates of later issues.

Number 860204 is to be seen on a tinned-iron mark, the face of the sun with its rays being exactly similar to that of *Plate XLII*. I believe it belongs to the end of the eighteenth century.

With regard to the origin of the design itself, I have already referred to this on p. 32. Since writing those remarks I have found a good example of a man's face in the sun in Wynkyn de Worde's "Sagittarius" device, which



1825-26.

was first used as a colophon by that famous printer, Caxton's chief workman and successor, in 1506. A print of it may be seen on p. 36 of H. R. Plomer's *History of English Printing*. It exactly resembles the face of the sun of the earliest of these marks.

The only Sun fire-mark remaining *in situ* which I have noticed in Midlothian is that on the front of Gracemount, Liberton, an ancient house restored by Robert Adam, the celebrated architect, who died in 1792. It is evident by the number of the policy that the house was insured at the Sun Office at the time of the refacing of the house, towards the end of the eighteenth century. Gracemount is the property and residence of my publisher, Mr. C. E. Green.

THE SUN OF DUBLIN

Established **1802**. In 1804 it amalgamated with the "British" of London (established 1799), and became the British and Irish United (William Coote).

Number of variants—1.

Description.—Up till 1904 Mr. Coote had only come across two specimens of this lead mark.

THE SURREY, SUSSEX, AND SOUTHWARK

Established **1825**. Died out 1826 (A. B. Dawson).

Number of variants—1.

Description of Plate XLIII.—Made of cast iron; size, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. The curious device upon it is quoted by Berry as the arms of Southwark, though the town had no matriculated bearings in 1894. The arms may be described thus:—"Az., an annulet ensigned with a cross pattée or, interlaced with a saltier conjoined in base of the second." Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson's collection.

THE UNION

Established 1714. Originally known as the "Double Hand-in-Hand Fire Office for insuring goods and merchandize by mutual contribution in the way of the Hand-in-Hand Office for houses."

Number of variants—5.

Description of Plate XLIV.—Made of lead; size vertically, $10\frac{1}{2}$ ins.; panel above, 7 ins. crossways. The whole of it had been once gilded. A beautiful character of letter in very deep relief and well modelled hands are to be seen here. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. A. B. Dawson's collection. I myself fixed the mark against an old stone wall for effect, and sketched it in that position.

THE WEST OF ENGLAND

Established 1807. Amalgamated with the Commercial Union in 1894.

Number of variants—5.

Description.—In all of the variants a king, clad in ancient dress and crowned with an open crown. In three of them he holds the spear in his right hand, and supports a shield (showing a dragon) with his left.

THE WESTERN (SCOTLAND)

Established 1844. Founded in Glasgow, and transferred to the Northern in 1847.

Number of variants—1.

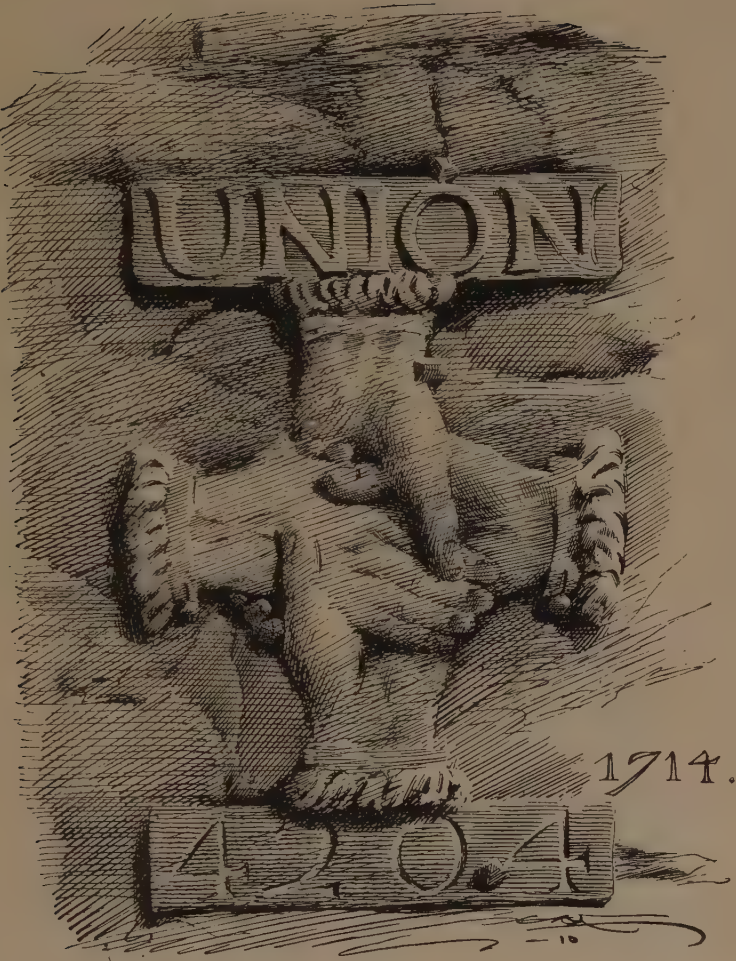
Description.—

THE WEST OF SCOTLAND

Established —.

Number of variants—1.

Description.—A large circular lead mark with an Imperial crown in the centre and title of the office around it.



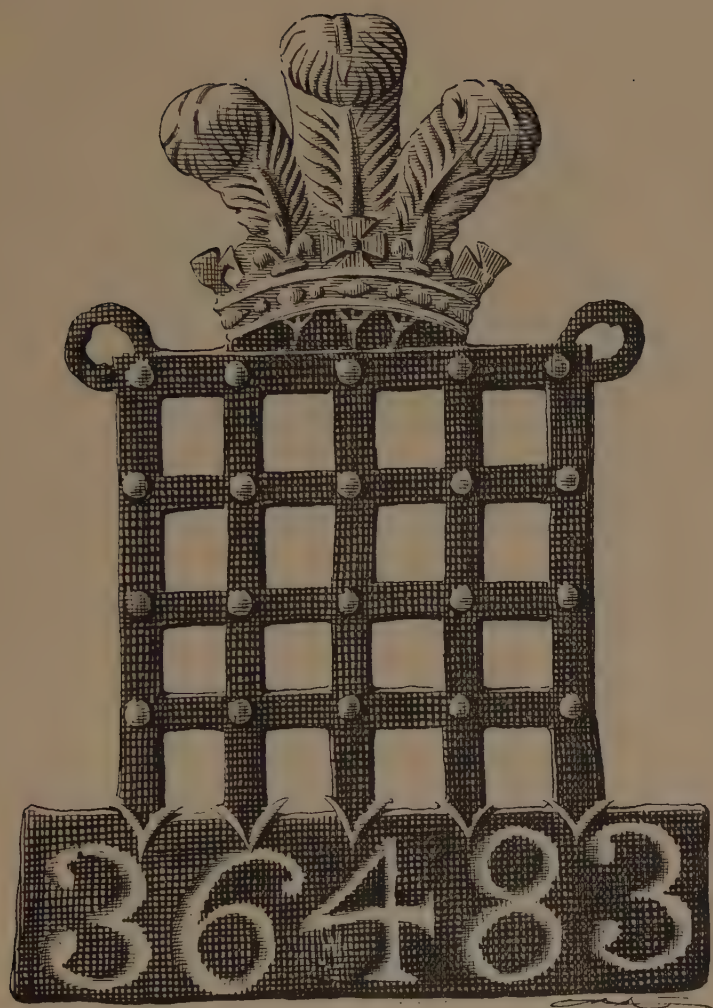
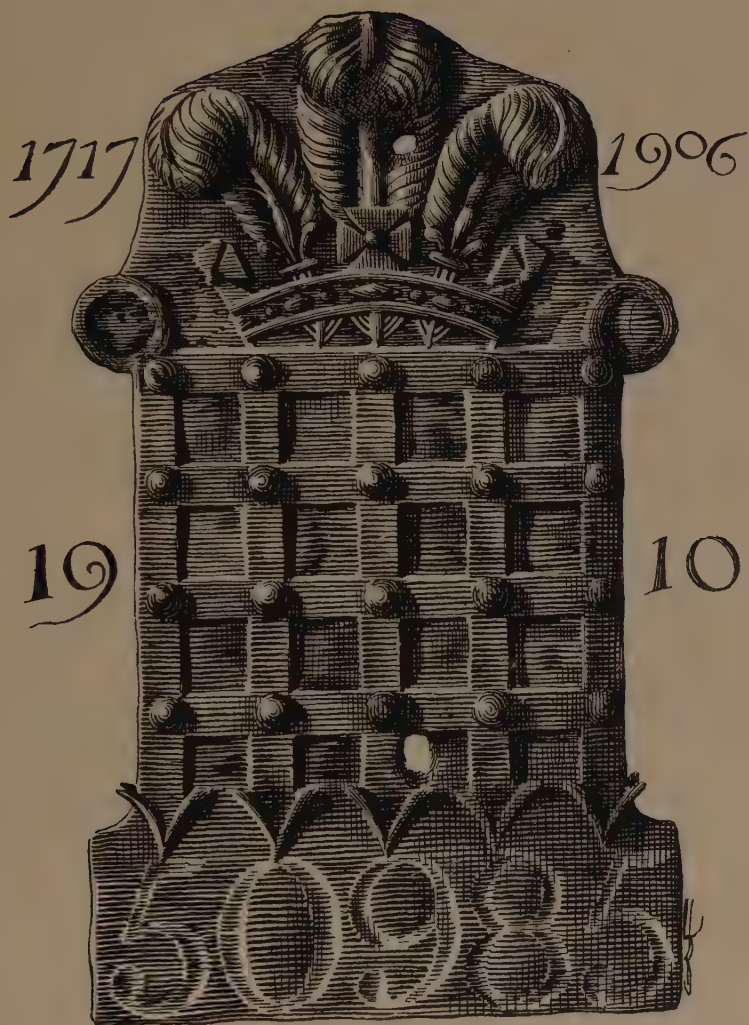


PLATE XLV





THE WESTMINSTER

Established 1717. This is the fifth oldest fire office in the world of which we have any record, and it still lives. From 1768 its management was in a single family, and in the fourth generation in 1906, when it was re-constituted.

Number of variants—5.

Description of Plate XLV.—One of the earlier and fenestrated examples of this old lead mark, with the policy number 36483 upon its panel. It represents a portcullis (without its “chains pendent” in this case), which is a “charge” from the coat of arms of the city of Westminster, and the Prince of Wales’ feathers.

It was originally, no doubt, gilded all over, as was the mark shown in *Plate XLVI*. Size, $9\frac{1}{2}$ ins. vertically, and width of portcullis, $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Pordage’s collection.

Description of Plate XLVI.—Size of lead, $9\frac{1}{2}$ ins. vertically by $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. The mark was once gilded all over. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Stevenson’s collection.

THE WORCESTER

Established 1790.

Number of variants—3.

Description of Plate XLVII.—A particularly handsome lead mark showing the arms of Worcester, which seem here to be a kind of combination of the “antient and modern armes,” the former being—“*quarterly sa. and gu., a tower triple towered arg.;*” and the latter, “*arg., a fesse between three pears sa.*”

Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson’s collection.

THE YORKSHIRE

Established 1824.

Number of variants—3

Description of Plate XLVIII.—A copper plate ($9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ ins.), showing a gilded York Minster in very low relief upon a red ground. Drawn from a specimen in Mr. Dawson's collection.

THE "HAND-IN-HAND" OF PHILADELPHIA

Established 1752. (J. Griswold.)

I have included a drawing of an American mark (*Plate XLIX.*) in this collection of British fire-marks, because it shows a most ingenious design—the locking of four hands together—an arrangement quite different to the "Double Hand-in-Hand" of the old Union Fire Office. Of course most of us know of the *human* sedan-chair, used for "an accident" when a stretcher is not at hand; the idea has, doubtless, originated from the sight of that seat, formed by the locking together of the hands of two people. Its size is 7 ins. vertically by $6\frac{1}{2}$ ins. below. Drawn from a new leaden cast in the collection of Mr. H. J. Stevenson.



PLATE XLVIII

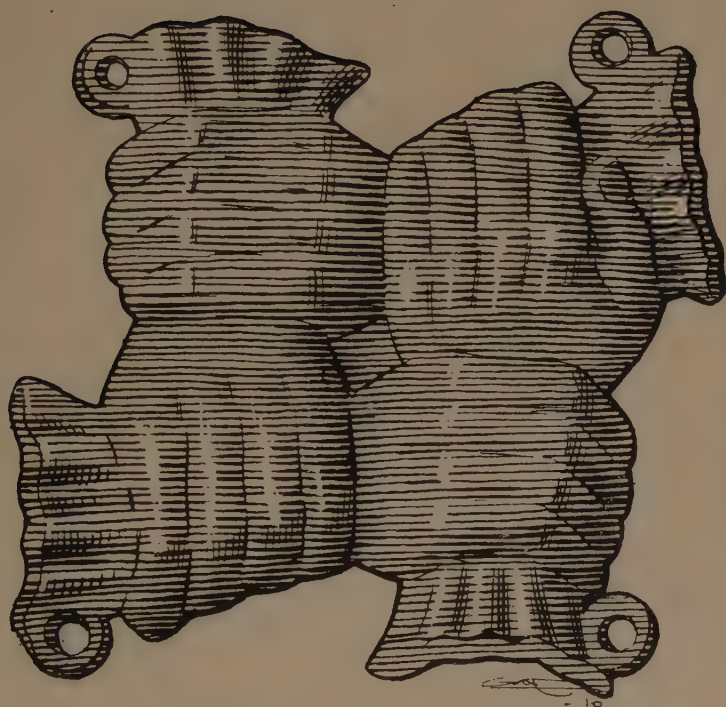


PLATE XLIX

APPENDIX

(See footnote, p. 14.)

SINCE the type for this book had been set up, I have gleaned some more verses which appear to have escaped the notice of those few who have briefly discussed the fire-mark in print.

They appear in other parts of *Rejected Addresses*. From "Drury's Dirge" I quote the following:—

*"Hark! the engines blandly thunder,
Fleecy clouds dishevell'd lie,
And the firemen, mute with wonder,
On the son of Saturn cry.*

*See the bird of Ammon sailing,
Perches on the engine's peak,
And, the Eagle firemen hailing,
Soothes them with its bickering beak."*

But the Brothers Smith, in the section imitative of Robert Southey's eccentric metre, allude to no less than seven more fire offices which were running previous to 1812—

*"Now come the men of fire to quench the fires:
To Russell Street see Globe and Atlas run,
Hope gallops first, and second Sun;
On flying heel,
See Hand-in-Hand
Overtake the band!
View with what glowing wheel
He nicks
Phoenix!*

*While Albion scampers from Bridge Street,
Blackfriars—
Drury Lane! Drury Lane!
Drury Lane! Drury Lane!
They shout and they bellow again and again,
All, all in vain!"*



GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL.
(His "*Mark.*")

OTHER WORKS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

1. A RIDING RETROSPECT, 1895.
2. AN OLD RABY HUNT CLUB ALBUM.
[Dedicated to the Marquess of Zetland, K.T., M.F.H.] 1899.
3. NOTES FROM THE DIARY OF A DOCTOR, ARTIST, AND SPORTSMAN, 1901.
4. A NORTH COUNTRY ALBUM, 1902.
[Dedicated to Sir Jonathan E. Backhouse, Bart.]
5. DARLINGTON IN SILHOUETTE, 1903.
6. GEORGE A. FOTHERGILL'S SKETCH-BOOK. 6 Parts, 1904 to 1908.
7. HUMOURS OF THE DARLINGTON HORSE FAIR.
8. A PICTORIAL SURVEY OF ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCH, DARLINGTON, 1906.
9. STONES AND CURIOSITIES OF EDINBURGH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD. Parts I.
and II.
[Dedicated to Sir George Reid, R.S.A., LL.D., and Dr. Joseph Anderson, LL.D.]
10. TWENTY SPORTING DESIGNS WITH SELECTIONS FROM THE POETS (16th to
20th century), which includes Biographical and Critical Notes.
[Dedicated to Colonel W. Hall Walker, M.P.]

As well as numerous papers and articles contributed to *Baily's Magazine*, the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, the *Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, *The Antiquary*, *The Weekly Scotsman*, etc.



